Volume 2 • Issue 7 • June 1997

PS Extreme

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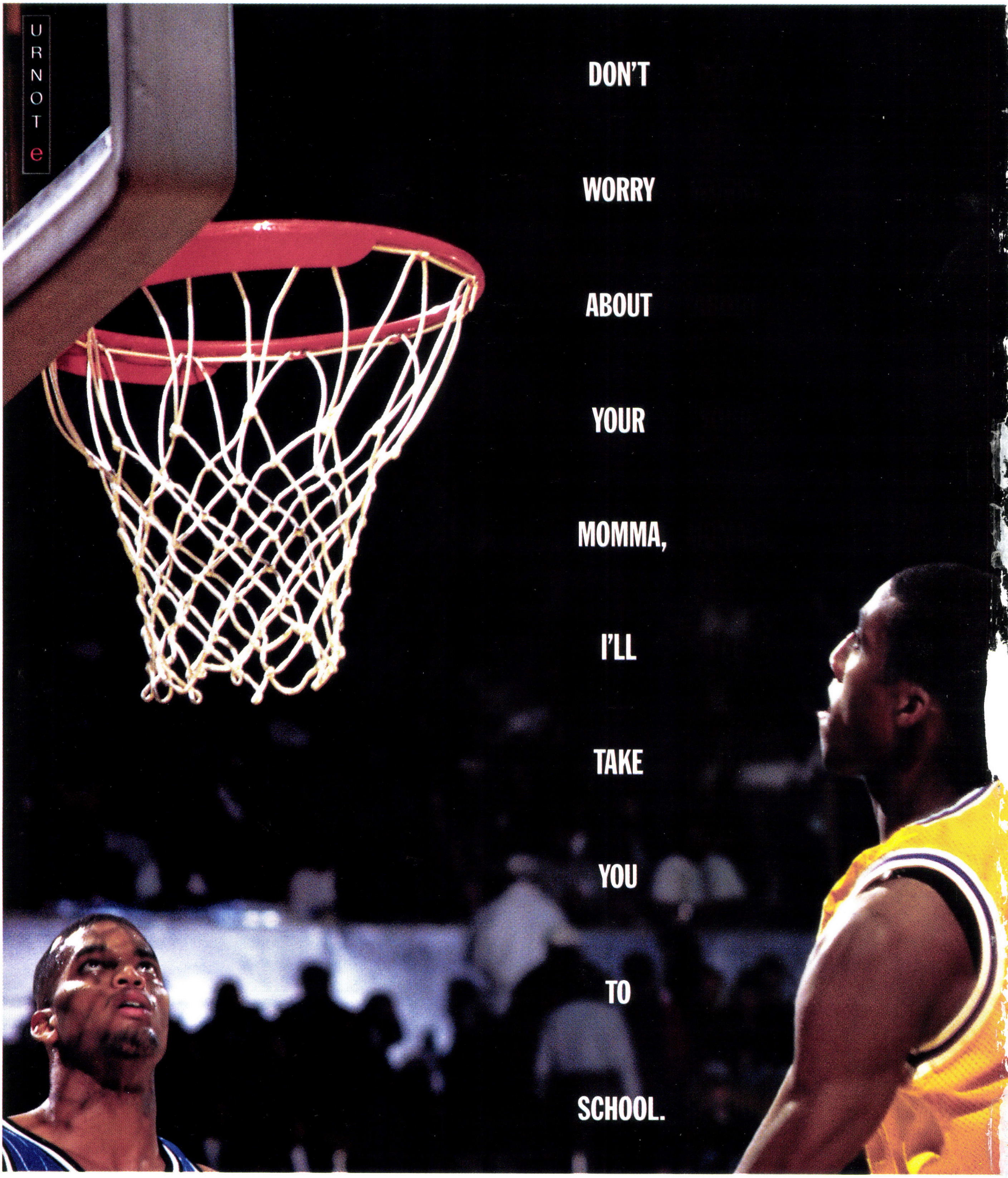
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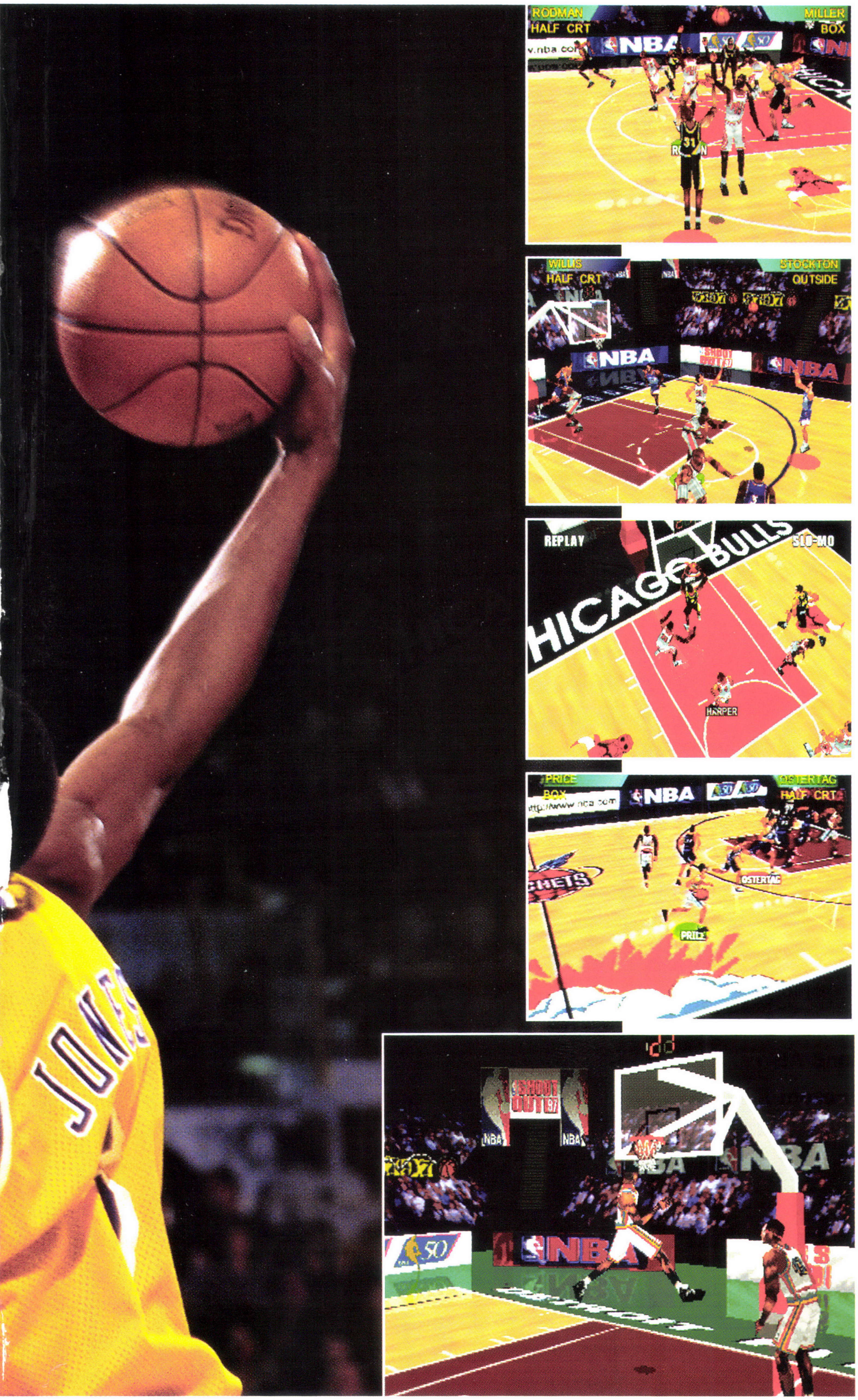
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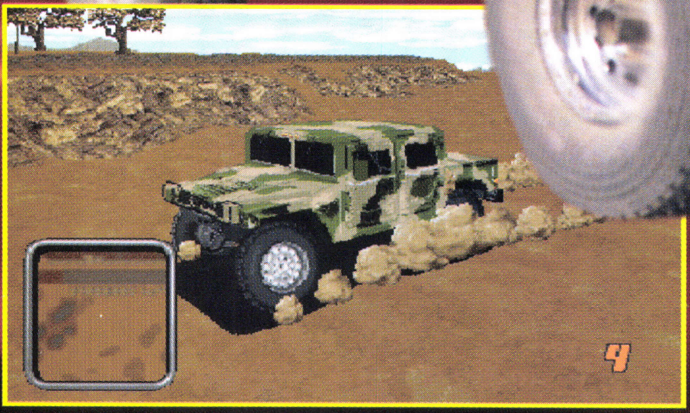

This rugged and mighty off-road behemoth can conquer any terrain.

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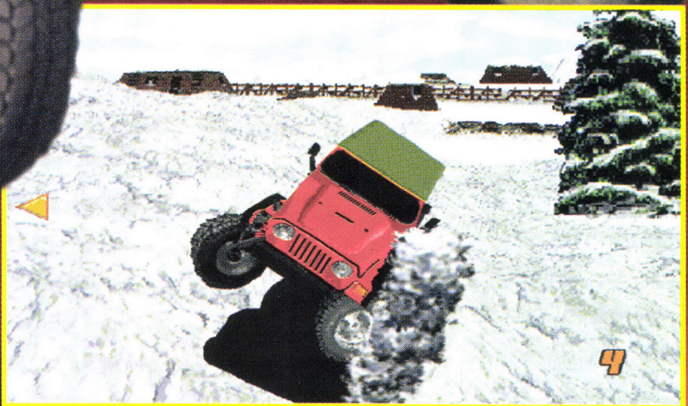

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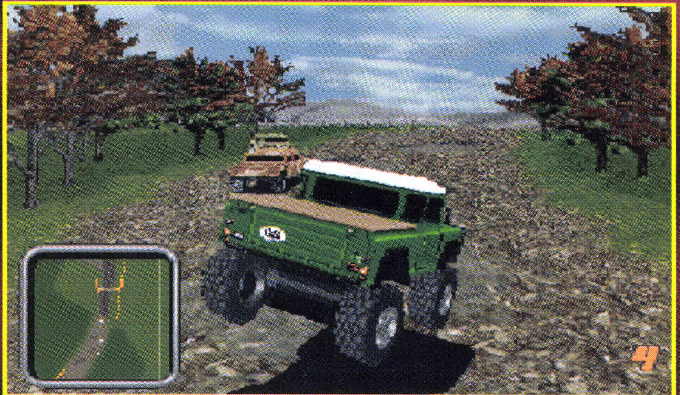

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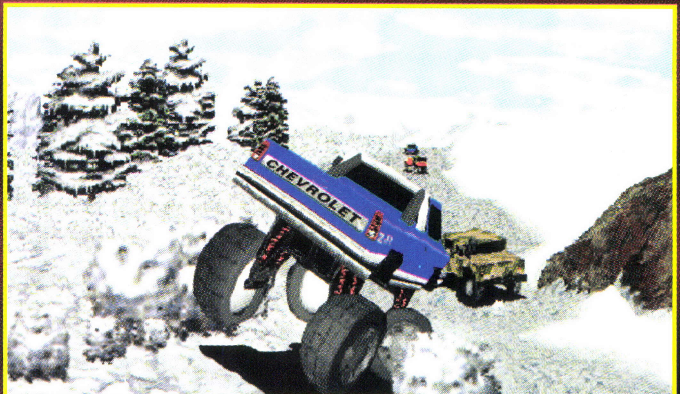

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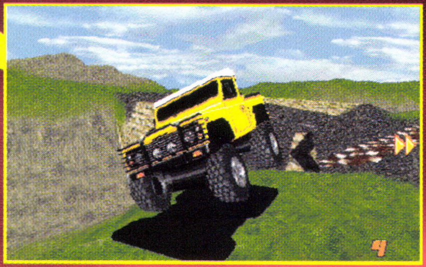
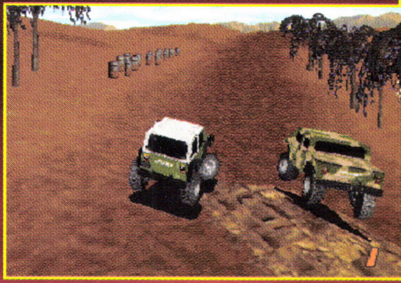
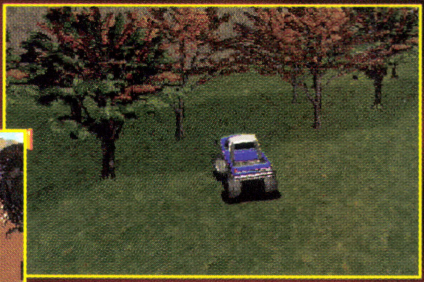


12 tracks test your off-road skills. Negotiate treacherous terrain as you battle for the checkered flag!



Four ways to race: SINGLE RACE, FULL-SEASON, CLASS LEAGUES, and MIXED LEAGUES.



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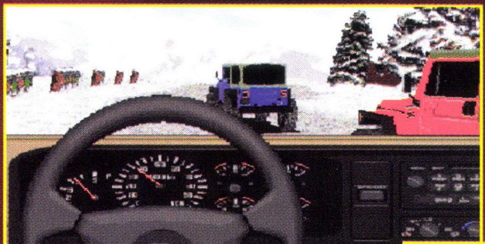
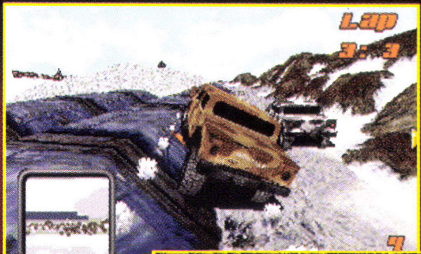
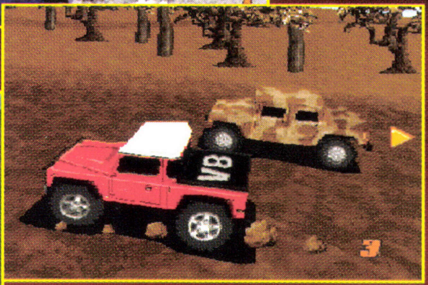
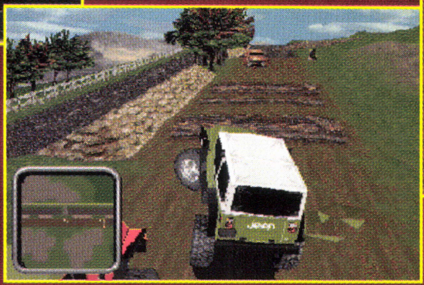


View the action from any of 9 camera views selectable on the fly!







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VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 7
JUNE, 1997

IN THE EXTREME

EXNEWS: Page 12

Crash 2 makes his debut, EA gets bigger, Acclaim brings 3DO softs to the PSX and Midway makes a Mortal Aktion game.

EXECUTE: Page 18

All your favorite games get cheated this month... Need for Speed 2, NBA in the Zone 2, NBA Shootout, Puzzle Fighter II, Mech Warrior 2, Test Drive: Off Road, Andretti Racing, ID4, PlayStation Underground, WCW vs the World and who could forget, undie codes for Soul Blade!

EXCLUSIVE: Page 28

Plenty of exclusive American infos this month with a sneak peek at what Virgin's got in store, plus never before seen screens of Spawn and Final Fantasy VII to boot. Remember, if it's not in PSExtreme, it probably isn't real.

EXPECTING: Page 30

This month, expect to see Fighting Force, Bug Riders, Rebel Moon, Warcraft II, Castlevania X, NHL Breakaway, Pitfall 3D and much more!

EXTREME: Page 44

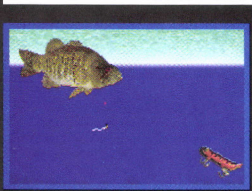
Discover The Lost World.

EXRATED: Page 48

Once again we massage your senses with page after page of the curviest layouts used in print today. You won't find us using abrasive sharp corners like those used in inferior mags! We're #1!!!!!

EXPORT: Page 76

Our four EX*PORT* pages are dripping with the most moistest, powerful, hyper-realistical Japanese coverage available in print. We're quivering with the piety of it. Don't even think about it, you need to read these pages.



SO, DAVE...

EDITORIAL

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK

Most months, when I sit down to write this column, I have a very clear concept of what I want to impart to you, our loyal readers. The topic is always related to video games and, most of the time, has a fairly serious approach to its subject matter.

This month, I just don't feel like doing that. We produce this magazine, and you buy it, because we all love playing video games... period. This is what I want to focus on — why, at the age of 35, with a wife, two children (#2 should squirt out sometime at the end of May/beginning of June) a company to run and a mortgage, I just can't stop playing games.

OK, the obvious answer is that I am mentally deranged... true, but I think it runs much deeper than that. To me, video games represent a chance to experience alternate worlds, realities and personalities. Chances are that I've pretty much missed my shot at playing in the NBA or NFL (unless they start a new Geezer Wheezers league, then I'm a shoe-in), and that I'll never find myself behind the wheel of a Formula 1 car. I can pick up magazines and books, or watch games on TV, but these are passive experiences. If I pop in NFL GameDay '97 or Formula 1 (to name but a few), I'm THE MAN! It is my decision making that changes the course of the game, my reactions that determine whether or not I zip through that tight turn at Monaco unscathed. I'm pretty sure I'll never be a woman and that Indiana Jones doesn't exist in "real" life, but, if I pop in Tomb Raider — I'm both and completely involved in this parallel universe. How many of you have gone to the store, purchased a new game, come home, fired up the PlayStation and, suddenly, 5-6 hours of your life has disappeared? Senator Lieberman and his goons can say what they like, but you can't convince me that these experiences in charting courses, plotting success strategies, puzzle solving and basic hand-eye reactions are not positive experiences for children and adults alike.

It is now mid-April and I have just left Sony's offices after seeing shots of Crash Bandicoot 2 for the first time, and after playing the first level of Tomb Raider 2 earlier in the week. In the next two days, I have to fly to Los Angeles on business, go with my wife to a new-born baby care class, finish this issue of PSExtreme, start our next two projects, play golf with a few clients, go to my nephew's Little League game, finish my taxes, and finish painting the baby's room. The funny thing is that, for as much as I enjoy, and need to do, these other things, I can't wait to get my hands on the new Crash and Tomb Raider.

And, it's not like I just got into this. I've been playing electronic games since 1974, and I'm still as enthusiastic about them today as I was the first time I hit the 'Start' button on my uncle's Fairchild Channel F system. We all are, and I hope that enthusiasm comes through in the magazine. Enjoy the issue.

Dave

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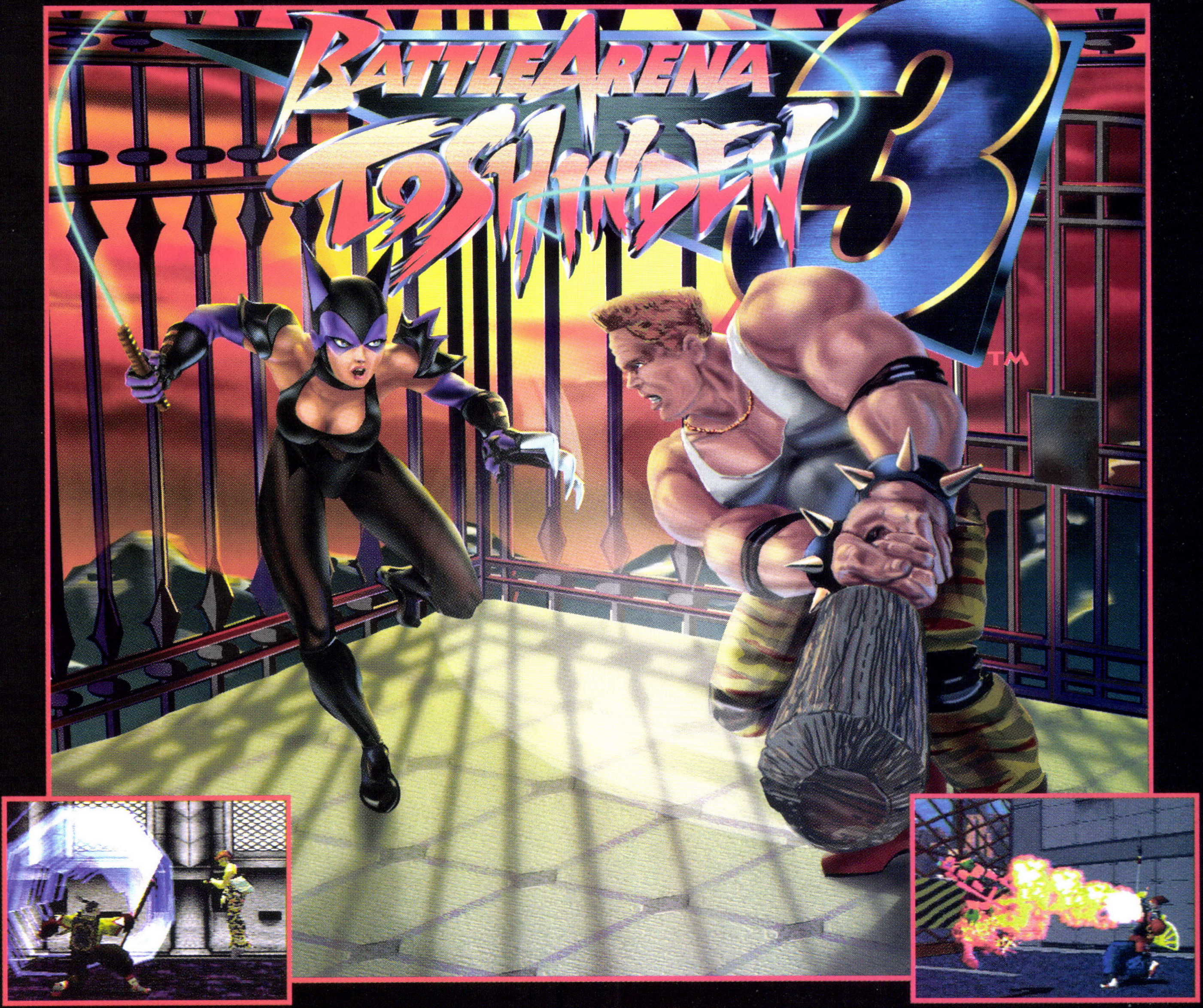
If you consider death charming.



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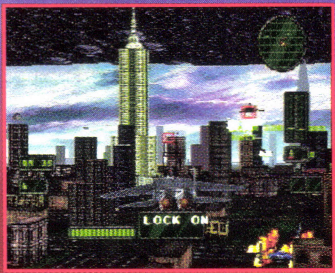
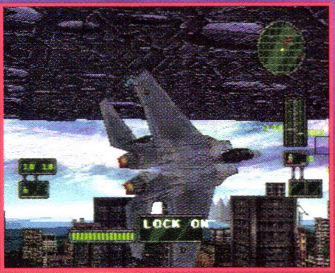
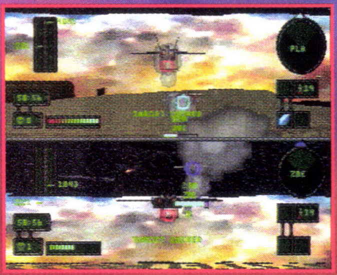


Fly over 15 of the hottest fighter planes including F-18s, Soviet MIGs and Alien Attackers.



Blast your way through over a dozen missions that take you from the Grand Canyon, to Tokyo, to Paris.



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EXMAIL

Dear PSExtreme,

Your magazine is great for PlayStation owners. A couple of suggestions. Codes for games for young kids. A complete article on only gun games, all the ones that are out now and what ever possible future games.

I don't play video games, never have, from the very beginning till now, first it was my two sons, now it's my grandchildren. I get great pleasure in watching them play the games.

At times there are up to 8 kids around our old TV which the game is hooked up too. Sometimes some sleep over night and my wife makes pancakes for them. I buy the ice cream, cups, chips & pretzels. I've been selling a lot my LPs & CD soundtracks to buy more games.

If you saw Goodfellas, the one that played Karen (Lorraine Bracco) is my cousin. Well guys, hope you keep up the PS mag.

Yours truly
Tony
Brooklyn, NY

P.S. My cousin's husband now is James Ernest Olmos.

Thanks for writing, Tony.

Dear PSExtreme,

I am writing this for my sons Adam (7 yrs) and Jordan (9 yrs). They worked on an Invisibility code for Twisted Metal II until Adam broke the sequence.

Invisibility ➡⬇⬅⬆

This weapon can be accessed as long as the Advance Attack Energy Bar is green.

Mom

P.S. As a mother I'm just delighted two brothers can work together on something.

That is delightful. Not quite contest winning, but still quite delightful.

Hey PSExtreme,

I have a couple of things that I would like to ask your friendly, courteous and knowledgeable staff of gaming experts. First of all, I have heard from an anonymous source that the PlayStation was originally going to be the Nintendo 64 system. An article that I read stated that Sony was going to design the hardware and manufacture it for Nintendo — but at the last minute Sony pulled out of the deal and kept the machine for themselves, deciding not to sell it to Nintendo. This would make sense, considering the N64's late arrival to the market and trouble with getting games out to their consumers. Could this have been a strategic, albeit unscrupulous, plan by Sony to get Nintendo out of the market? Could Sony have been planning to keep the machine for themselves the entire time, only telling Nintendo that they would hand the machine over to them to get them out of the market? If you guys at PSExtreme know anything about this, do tell! I found the article rather amusing, though I don't know for sure if any of it was true.

Lastly, I have heard some news that troubles me even more than the above, and I hope that you reply to this letter because if you don't I will be forced to believe this news to be true and that your magazine is part of a worldwide — perhaps a galactic — scandal of world domination. So here it goes: the word on the streets these days is that Dimension Publishing is owned and operated by none other than a giant, super-intelligent chicken known only as "Boo". I fear that you plan to takeover the world, by means of subliminal messages in your magazine, and create a race of "super chickens" that are by all means superior to humans, though only capable of playing video games. Is this true? Are you planning to turn your readers into giant, video-gaming chickens? If so, shame on you all. Here is a recipe for chicken soup just in case you get any ideas.

13 cups O' chicken broth
1/4 cup dry vermouth
1/4 cup of butter
1 cup of heavy cream
1 package of dry egg noodles
1-1/2 cups of water
3/4 cup of flour
2 cups of diced, cooked chicken
salt, pepper and parsley to taste

Combine 1 cup of broth, the vermouth and butter in a pan and bring to a boil and reduce it until it is only 1/4 cup and syrupy. stir in the cream and set aside. Bring remaining broth to boil and add noodles and cook until tender. combine the flour and butter and stir until smooth and then stir this mixture into the broth and noodles until creamy. Stir in the reserved cream and vermouth mixture and add the chicken. Add seasonings and serve.

Again, shame on all of you giant chickens — planning to take over the world and all — j'heeze.

Mike Whitehead
Elgin, IL

P.S. Even if you are giant chickens, your magazine is still the best , if you're chickens...

What you read about Sony designing the post-SNES Nintendo hardware is partially true. The deal fell through, but it's unlikely that it was any kind of conspiracy on the part of Sony.
*Haven't you noticed that *somewhere*, there's a chicken in most every game you play?*

Dear PSExtreme,

I read in your April 1997 issue about George Goolsby's PlayStation overheating. Here's the solution. Get four of those blue ice packets used for small portable ice chests. I use 3M's Cold Comfort Reusable Pack, size ten by four inches by one-half inch thick. They take up very little space in the freezer so leave them there. When playing games, place one directly under the console and exchange it for a fresh frozen one every hour. My new PlayStation and old Jaguar haven't any problems what-so-ever. When done playing after numerous hours, the console is very cool to the touch.

Sincerely,
Don Clark

Dear PSExtreme,

I have a PlayStation and a subscription to your magazine. I play games constantly and read your magazines repeatedly for clues as to what to buy next. I say "clues" because your reviews are so misleading that a person has to take your reviewer's opinions with a couple of tablespoons of salt. That's right. I'm not gonna kiss your splotchy post teenage, baggy pants and xxxl t-shirt wearing asses. Maybe you'd rather just throw this letter away right now, before I get insulting.

Here are my reviews as they should appear in your magazine.

1) Tomb Raider. Yup, you're right. Best game ever, there should be more.
2) NFL GameDay. What kind of octopus can handle all these different buttons when I can't even tell who has the ball? Besides, I hate football.
3) NCAA Gamebreaker. Don't know, didn't try it.
4) Tekken 2. To borrow an expression from my friend on Saturday Night Live, David Spade, I liked this game better the first time when it was called Tekken. I've seen this crap before. I want my money back.
5) Crash Bandicoot. Great gameplay. You will love it until you finish it. Then you will hate it.
6) NHL Face Off 97. See #2.
7) Twisted Metal II. I hated TM. This is more of the same.
8) Formula 1. Sucked.
9) Die Hard Trilogy. Ditto.
10) Pandemonium. Duh, duh, duh. What is this sh*t?
11) Tecmo's Deception. 56% for innovation.
12) Oh! Oh! Almost skipped Disruptor. I asked for this for Christmas because of your review. I hate you for it. You put this piece of junk on the cover of your magazine. Good visual does not make good game. Gameplay makes good game. For more info on gameplay and mood, see Doom.
13) Tunnel B-1. I want my money back for renting this boring uninspired half @$$ed frisbee made of compressed bat guano.

The following are my Platinum games:

1) Tomb Raider
2) Air Combat — the reason I bought my PlayStation.
3) Tekken
4) Doom
5) Need for Speed
6) Crash Bandicoot
7) Extreme Games
8) Shell Shocked
9) Carnage Heart. The first PlayStation game to treat players like we're not idiots. Unfortunately we're not geniuses. The game instructions are tiny. This game cries out for an 8.5 x 11 strategy guide and a few walkthroughs. It should also carry a warning, "Danger, this is not Mech Warrior. Playing Carnage Heart forces you to use your mind. You may have to face the fact that you're really stupid. If you know yourself to be stupid, go buy Tunnel B1 or Disruptor.

It seems obvious to me that you are an arm of the marketing department for Sony and various game makers. That's why you give such high ratings to most of the games you review. Batman Forever and Dragonheart must have been late with their kickback. I have been forced to begin a congressional review of your illegal and treasonous activity. Get yourself some honest reviewers like myself or you could face years behind bars where you will be traded amongst the dominant prisoners like a pack of cigarettes. I am available.

Sincerely,
Pete

P.S. What is it with all those 1.5" x 1.5" pictures around your reviews? Is that just filler to make your magazine look Jazzy? how about the 1.5" tall EX*RATED* word at the bottom of each page. This crap just takes away from what could be insightful writing, content, content, content.

Oh Pete, we know you don't really mean all that mean stuff. You're working for our competitors, aren't you?! Admit it! You're being paid to launch a campaign against us! Your cover's blown! Air Combat? Shell Shock? Dude, you're a dork!

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-GameFan

"Swagman's dream-like graphics and involving gameplay will capture the player's imagination!"
-PS Extreme

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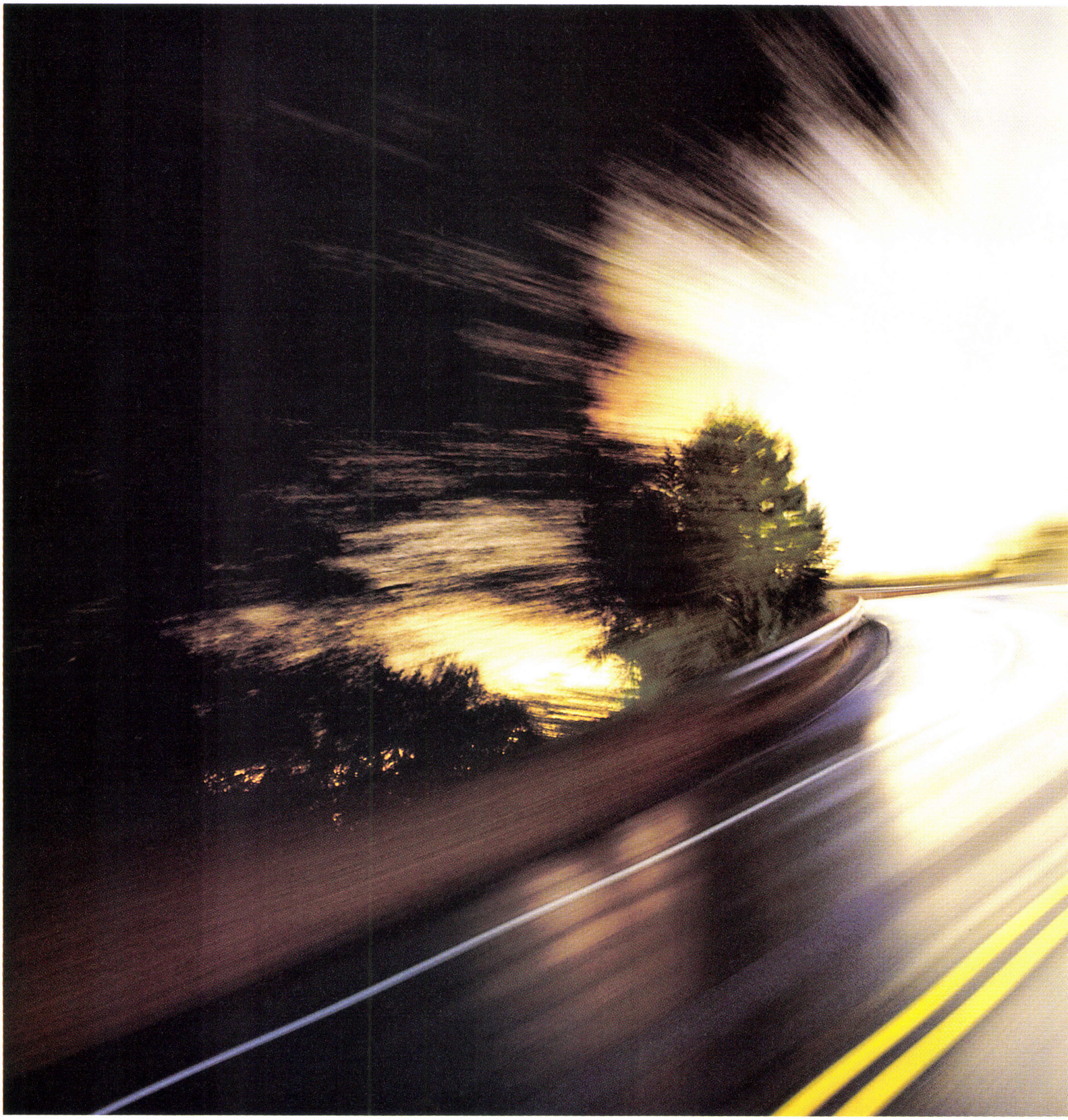
For Swagman hints and tips: CALL 1-900-77EIDOS $.95 per minute / Must have touchtone phone / If under 18, must have parent's permission



THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A TWO-GAME GARAGE.

Lose the pretenders. Rage Racer™ is the king of speed. Nothing captures the realism of street racing like it. Rage Racer is not some retread. It's brand new from the ground up. But please, don't take our word for it. Take one lap. Then you'll know why *Game Fan* calls Rage Racer "the greatest racing game on the planet."

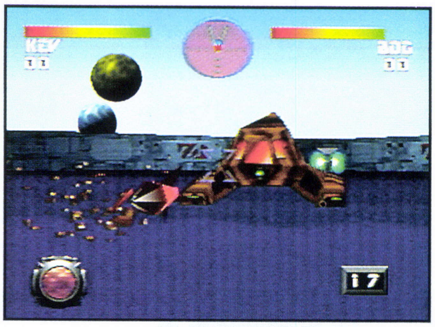
RAGE RACER™

Real. Fast.

PlayStation Gaming News From Around The Globe

ACCLAIM'S 3DO CONNECTION COMING SOON

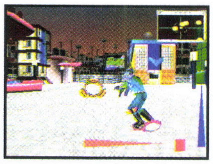
As profiled a few months back in the pages of EXNews, Killing Time and Battle Sport are edging closer to completion in their PlayStation incarnations. Both titles, products of Redwood City, California-based Studio 3DO, were initially brought to life on the ill-fated 3DO hardware. The good news is that Killing Time and Battle Sport were two of the best games for the system and that they are being adapted to take advantage of the PlayStation's superior processing power. Killing Time falls in the Doom-clone category, in that it is a 1st person shooter. But, the game has a deep plot, involving the mysterious deaths of a large group of the well-to-do crowd that were attending a party on an isolated island retreat, and many puzzles to solve. Battle Sport, similar in concept to LucasArts' Ballblazer Champions, is a futuristic sporting event that puts 1-2 players in competing vehicles, with the goal to push the 'ball' into the other person's goal. Look for more information and reviews on these two titles over the next few issues of PSExtreme.

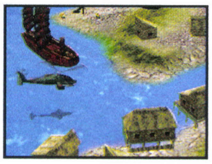


EA: NEW GAMES, NEW "PARTNERSHIPS"

The shots you are currently pursuing are from two of Electronic Arts' new PlayStation titles that will be shown at E3. Although we don't have much information at this point in time, "Nuclear Strike" (the latest in the "Strike" series) and "Reboot" (based on the revolutionary, computer animated, kids show) are scheduled for release during the 3rd and 4th quarters of this year.

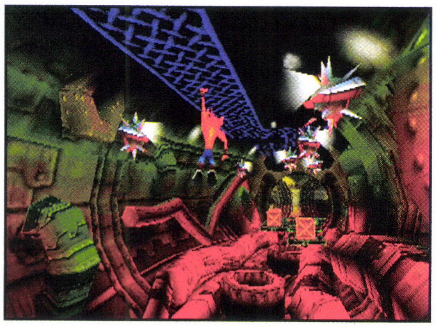
In other EA news, The Lost World: Jurassic Park (why, what a coinkadink, the cover story of this very issue!) and its publisher, Dreamworks Interactive, have become the latest in a long list of acquisitions and Affiliated Label partners for the San Mateo, California based software publisher. Electronic Arts will be responsible for the retail distribution of the product, currently scheduled for a late May launch.

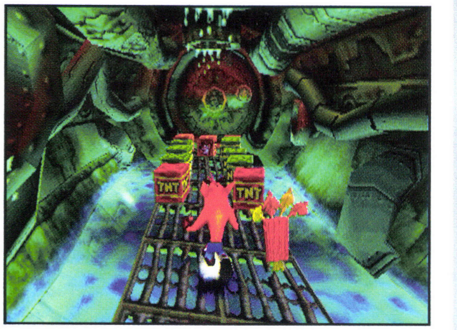


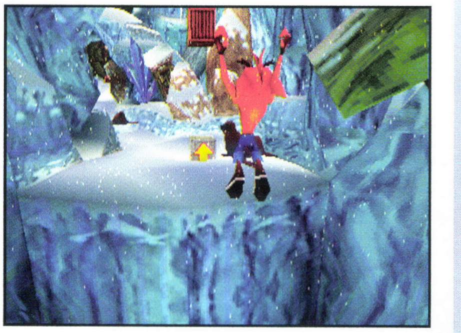


CRASH 2 — BIGGER, BADDER, BETTER

Here they are! -- the first shots of Crash Bandicoot 2 (working title), the sequel to what we believe to be one of the three best games available for the PlayStation. For those of you who are new to the PlayStation world, the original Crash Bandicoot was released in September 1996 and, to this day, it remains the most graphically remarkable game available for any home system. The diversity in the game's play environments and the simple, but addictive, gameplay mechanics provide a game experience that is like no other. We expect great things from the folks at Naughty Dog (the game's developer), Universal Interactive and Sony (co-publishers) -- and, if these screens are any indication, we predict that the gaming world is going to be inflicted with another severe case of Marsupial Madness! Look for more on Crash 2 as it becomes available... ooga, boogah.







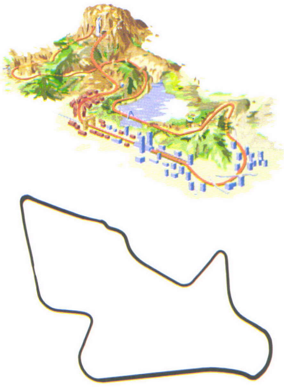
THE MYTH OF MORTAL KOMBAT

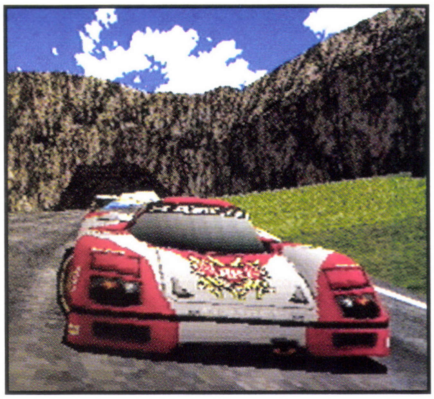
Midway recently announced that they will be producing MK Mythologies: Sub Zero, for the PlayStation. This game represents a dramatic change of pace for both the Mortal Kombat series and Midway as a software publisher.

MKM: SZ will, as the name implies, focus on the character of Sub Zero and bring him in to a real-time 3D world that focuses on offering the player many hours of exploration and arcade-style gameplay. There are 30 different enemies, 8 different worlds, detailed cinematic sequences, and an in-depth story line that fleshes out the Mortal Kombat mythology. Sound cool? Yeah, we thought so. We hope to have shots in the next issue.

EXNEWS

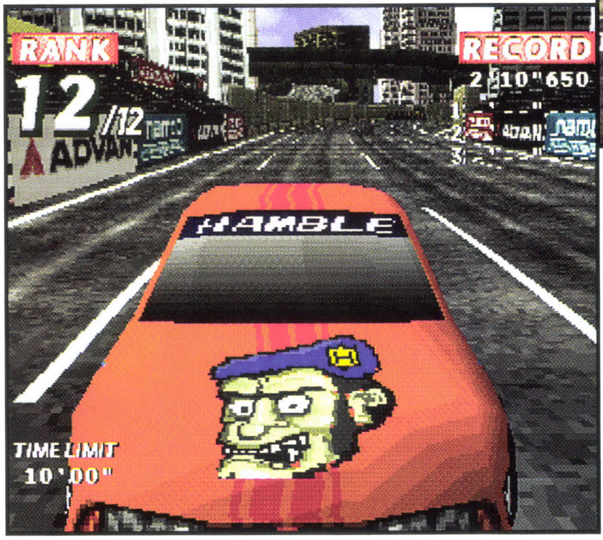
RANK
09 /12
RECORD
1'37"765
1'29"631
TIME LIMIT
9'25"

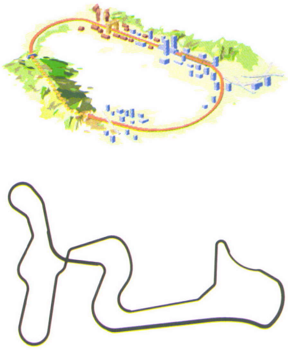




Welcome to the land of the flat-out fast. Tear up hellacious hills and rocket around hair-pin turns. 13 new Rage Racer cars stick to the tarmac like gum to the bottom of your shoe. 4 new tracks and an 11 circuit challenge will twist, fold, bend and bludgeon your central nervous system. The more rivals you humiliate, the more cash you accumulate. Use it to modify your existing car, or save it to finance a tricker, quicker ride. See the face on the hood of that car? His handsome mug was lacquered on with the Custom Paint & Team Logo Designer. No bolt was left untorqued in an effort to make Rage Racer the most realistic street racing experience. The only question is, how fast can you race to the store and buy it?

RANK
02 /12
RECORD
1'25"238
1:1'29"911
2:1'02"721
3:-'--"---
TIME LIMIT
7'22"
166


RANK
12 /12
RECORD
2'10"650
ADVAN
namco
HAMBLE
TIME LIMIT
10'00"



SECTION TIME
1:2'26"765
RECORD
2'26"765
namco
ADVAN
TOTALRECORD
7'28"765

PlayStation™

RAGE RACER™

Real. Fast.

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

POWERED BY namco®

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PlayStation Gaming News From Around The Globe

TOP 10 BEST SELLING PLAYSTATION TITLES RANKED ON UNIT SALES FEBRUARY, 1997

1

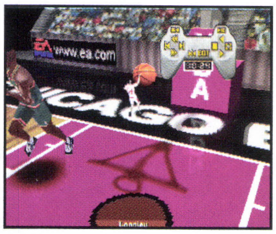
last month 1

Tomb Raider
Eidos
average retail price $53

PLATINUM X

2

last month 2



NBA Live '97
Electronic Arts
average retail price $52

BRONZE X

3

last month 3

SELECT CAR
X = SELECT
MAIN MENU
PREVIOUS

Twisted Metal 2
Sony
average retail price $53

GOLD X

4

last month 4

Tekken 2
Namco
average retail price $45

PLATINUM X

5

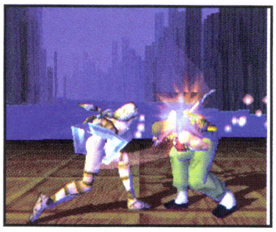
last month 6

Jet Moto
Sony
average retail price $53

SILVER X

6

last month **

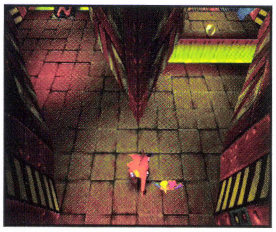


Soul Blade
Namco
average retail price $44

PLATINUM X

7

last month 8

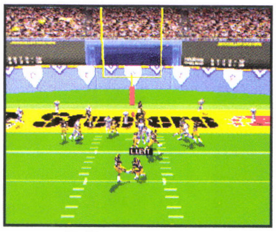


Crash Bandicoot
Sony
average retail price $50

PLATINUM X

8

last month 5

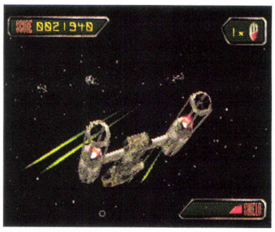


Madden '97
Electronic Arts
average retail price $52

BRONZE X

9

last month **



Rebel Assault II
LucasArts
average retail price $51

SILVER X

10

last month **

Dark Forces
LucasArts
average retail price $50

SILVER X

Source: NPD TRSTS Video Games Tracking Service • 9,000 outlets across the U.S.
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(516) 625-2294

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** Not in Top 10 Last Month

EX NEWS

TOMB RAIDER

PlayStation Magazin
Gaming Monthly
Ultra Game Players
Smokin' Holiday Issue
Computer Player
Next Generation
Who's that girl?
Game Informer
PS Extreme
EGM²
Electronic Gaming Monthly
TOMB RAIDER

Have you got yours yet?

If you know **Tomb Raider**, you know why **Lara Croft** is the #1 cover girl in gaming. No other game has won more awards, sold more copies, or kicked more ass. Hardcore gamers have made **Tomb Raider** the undisputed megahit of the year. Have your got yours yet?

Game of the Year
-PS Extreme

Game of the Year
-Game Fan

Game of the Year
-Computer Player

Action Game of the Year
-PC Gamer

Adventure Game of the Year
-Ultra Game Players

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INTERACTIVE
www.tombraider.com

CHECK OUT
Ninja
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PC CD
PlayStation
SEGA SATURN
CORE DESIGN INC.

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Lara Croft, gaming's #1 covergirl.

SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of ASCII's hot new RPG for the PlayStation, King's Field II (that's right, II, the sequel is ready!) or, if fighting's your thing, ASCII's SpecializedStick (you decide.) But wait! That's not all: if you act now, we'll also include ASCII's super stylish SpecializedPad for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the only, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, *PSExtreme*, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Congratulations and thanks go to this month's winner, Mark Jimenez of Waukegan, IL. Mark, you stud, one week after the game came out you got us these awesome codes. You truly are a gamer's gamer.

The Need for Speed 2

0:16.01
4
103
LAP
1/4
RECORD
1:58.64
POS
8/8

I've discovered some awesome codes for Need for Speed 2 and I just had to share them with the world so, of course, I sent them to the #1 PlayStation magazine on Earth, where I knew they would be sure to be seen by the millions of PlayStation owners.

BONUS CAR: Enter the password LILZIP and prepare to drive the Ford Indigo.

BONUS TRACK: Enter the password SHOTME to race on the Monolithic Studios track in the heart of fabulous Hollywood, California.

I hope that both the quality of the codes and the finesse of my butt smooching win me the goodies.

CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or ASCII Entertainment, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive (King's Field or an ASCII Specialized Stick), then we will choose for you.

Mech Warrior 2

MLASER
MPLAS
MPLAS
M_Gun
MLASER
MPLAS
MPLAS
XAC-10
JumpJet
Temp

CRUISE-CONTROL THROTTLE: Enter the password #AX0/A4YYA. Now you don't have to hold the throttle button down, so you can focus on aiming and shooting.

LEVEL PASSWORDS:

Clan Wolf

Trial of Refusal

Mission 1: T#00A0X++0
Mission 2: #/00A04+0#
Mission 3: T/00A0Z+T=
Mission 4: #000A0>4LA
Mission 5: T000/0X4L>
Mission 6: #X00/044LA
Mission 7: TX00/0Z4UT
Mission 8: #Y00/0>U#/
Mission 9: TY00=0XU<T
Mission 10: #A00=04ULL
Mission 11: TA00=0ZU#>
Mission 12: #<00*0>=T#
Mission 13: T<00*0X=0=
Mission 14: #>00*04=+4
Mission 15: T>00*0Z=Y0

Freebirth Trials

Mission 1: TL00A0XZUZ
Mission 2: #Z00A04Z#*
Mission 3: T*00A0ZLY+

Wolf's Dragoons

Mission 1: TT00A0XL0/
Mission 2: #*00A04L+X
Mission 3: T*00A0ZLY+

Clan Jade Falcon

Mission 1: T#X0A0X<<A
Mission 2: #/X0A04<L>
Mission 3: T/X0A0Z<#L
Mission 4: #0X0A0>>00
Mission 5: T0X0>0X>Y0
Mission 6: #XX0>04>T#
Mission 7: TXX0>0Z>0=
Mission 8: #YX0>0>Y+Y
Mission 9: TYX0/0XY0Z
Mission 10: #AX0/04Y+*
Mission 11: TAX0/0ZYYY
Mission 12: #<X0X0>AL/
Mission 13: T<X0X0XA#U
Mission 14: #>X0X04AU+
Mission 15: T>X0X0ZA<X

Crusader Trials

Mission1: TTX0A0X0LL
Mission 2: #*X0A040<Y
Mission 3: T*X0A0Z0U*

Inner Sphere Trials

Mission 1: TLX0A0XXYU
Mission 2: #ZX0A04X++
Mission 3: TZX0A0ZX0X

Codes supplied by Chris Baugher.

Super Puzzle Fighter II

HSIEN-KO's SISTER: Put on Morrigan, hold Select & put cursor 1 square over (away from the edge of the screen) and press ○.

ANITA: Put on Morrigan, hold Select, place cursor 2 squares over (away from the edge of the screen) and press ○.

Codes supplied by Justin Stevens.

Andretti Racing

season setup
Select Team / Circuit for the Upcoming Season
Eiger Competition
Team Record
Starts 76
Finishes 61
Wins 22
EA SPORTS

SELECT ANY STOCK CAR: Go to the "Begin Career" screen and type: GO BEARS! to be able to pick any stock car.

SELECT ANY INDY CAR: Same place, type GO BRUINS!

Code supplied by Adam Steinberg.

Test Drive: Off-Road

mph
Lap
1:3
Pos. 4

Enter the following at the "Enter Name" screen.

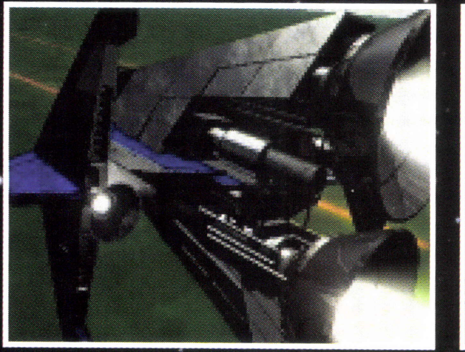
BONUS CARS:

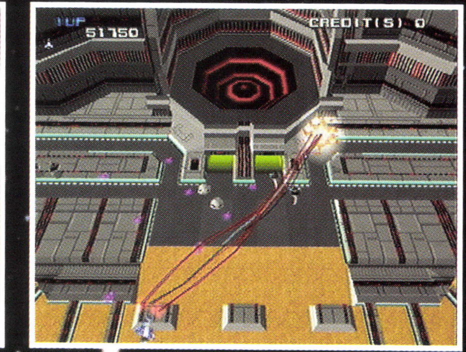
Stockcar — LOWRIDER
Hotrod — FIFTY
4x4 Buggy — SPRINTER
Monster Truck — BEEFY

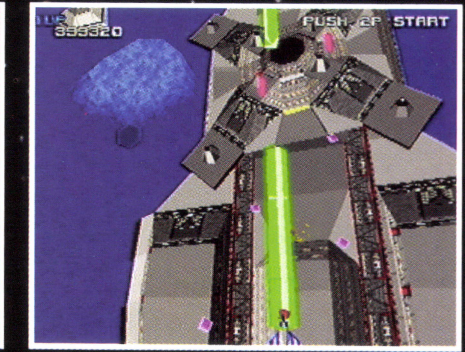
BONUS TRACKS:

Dirt Dash — FRIENDLY

SPACE HAS ALWAYS HAD THREE DIMENSIONS.
SO WHY HAVE SHOOTER GAMES ONLY GIVEN YOU TWO?







Introducing a new dimension in shooters - Xevious 3D/G+. A spectacular 3D shoot-fest, where it's you and all your new, improved interstellar weaponry against an entire galaxy of tough, nasty aliens. You get Xevious 3D/G, plus three other classic Xevious games. (Little alien caskets sold separately.)

PlayStation

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

POWERED BY
namco

XEVIOUS 3D/G+ ™

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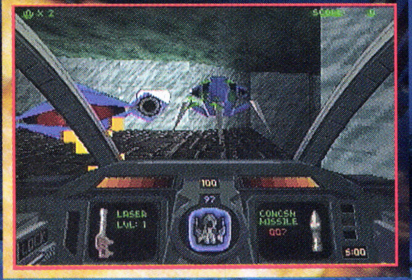
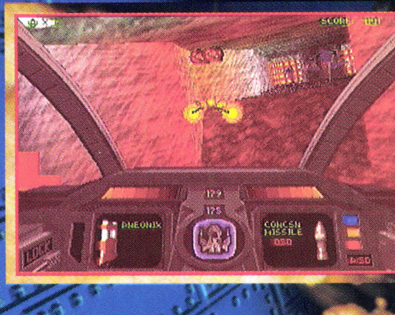
Get Shafted for

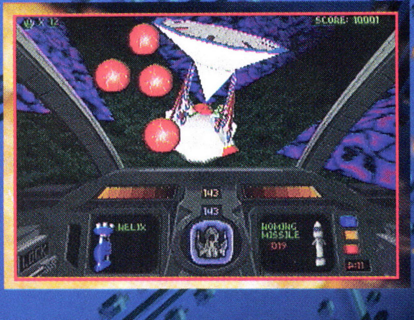
An all-new addiction exclusively for the PlayStation game console.

The best parts from the original have been super-charged for the latest and final version of Descent for the PlayStation game console. Use upgraded weapons, a faster reaction time and blow through never-before-seen levels and you'll see why this one is called MAXIMUM. Your newest addiction comes faster and hotter for you gamers who just want to plug-in and play!

But you better hurry – this is the last time Descent is coming to the PlayStation game console. After this, the only thing left will be some incredible memories and a few new craters.


X 2
SCORE
100
97
LASER LVL: 1
CONCSN MISSILE 007
5:00


SCORE
129
125
PHEONIX
CONCSN MISSILE 030


X 12
SCORE: 10001
143
143
HELIX
HOMING MISSILE 019

Take The Final Plunge at Full Throttle!

PlayStation™

TEEN
T
AGES 13+
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

Interplay™
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™
Interplay Website: www.interplay.com

Developed by:
Parallax Software

the Last Time!

PlayStation
DESCENT MAXIMUM
An All-New Addiction
TEEN

- 36 All-New levels never-before-seen in any Descent game.
- High-impact, non-stop subterranean action designed specifically for the PlayStation game console.
- New throbbing "stroboscopic" light source shading effects brings the intensity right in-your-face.
- More than a dozen weapons of devastation, from double-damage cannons to Level 6 Lasers.
- We mean 360° fluid movement – any direction, any time, at full speed. Use Sony's Analog Joystick for more enhanced control.
- Grab a Link Cable and go from One-player to Two-player Anarchy Levels.
- Metal pounding digital soundtrack takes your sensory input past all safety zones.

DESCENT™ MAXIMUM™

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Pharaoh's Curse — SANDDUNE
Sand Trap — CRAZY
Under Construction — ELITE
Snowball Express — SNOWMAN
Pipeline Way — ALLTRACK

Code supplied by Paul Butapetch.

ID4

YOU HAVE 1 KILL

In order to access the password screen, make sure there's no memory card in the unit, go to the options screen and select "Load Game", then enter one of the following.

LEVEL PASSWORDS:

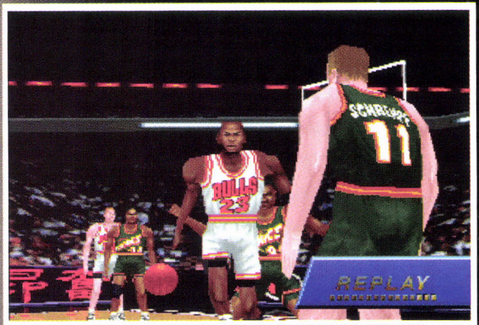
Level	Easy	Normal	Hard
Canyon	BBFHB	BBFMC	BBFQC
Washington	DBKHN	DBKMO	DBKQO
New York	GBKHW	GBKMX	GBKQX
Paris	LLSHW	LLSMX	LLSQX
Moscow	NL9HW	NL9MX	NL9QX
Tokyo	R39JD	R39NF	R39RF
Oahu	T59HW	T59MX	T59QX
Las Vegas	Z99HY	Z99MZ	Z99QZ
Mothership	399HG	399MH	399QH

Code supplied by Max Georges.

The Incredible Hulk

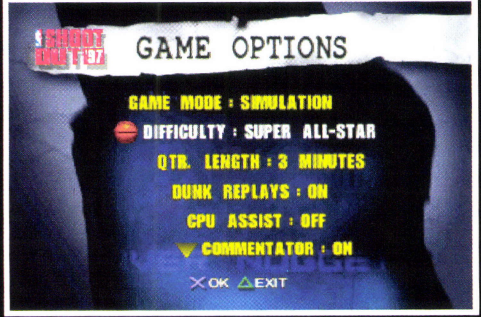
PASSWORDS: Level 1: 10C80B7C7C; LEVEL 2: 10C82E5E54; Level 3: 80D82E206E; Level 4: 00D02702BA.

NBA in the Zone 2



HIDDEN PLAYERS: You can play as Michael Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal and Charles Barkley, even though they're not "really" in the game for contractual reasons. Each of their teams has an unusually named player which is the star player in disguise (Jordan is called "M Guard," for example). First, change the jersey number of the player to his real-life number (Jordan's is 23, for example). Then substitute the star into the starting lineup. When you play the game, your player will look and play just like a superstar (Jordan is wearing his trademark black knee and elbow pads, for example).

NBA Shootout '97



GAME OPTIONS

GAME MODE : SIMULATION
DIFFICULTY : SUPER ALL-STAR
QTR. LENGTH : 3 MINUTES
DUNK REPLAYS : ON
CPU ASSIST : OFF
COMMENTATOR : ON

✕OK △EXIT

HIDDEN PLAYERS: Create a player and enter any of the names from the design credits in the back of the instruction manual. You can choose any stats you want. Go to the free agent pool and sign the new player to a team. During the game, your player will have his name announced whenever he scores.

SUPER ALL-STAR DIFFICULTY: At the GAME OPTIONS menu, highlight DIFFICULTY and quickly press L1, R1, L2, and R2. The "Super All-Star" difficulty should appear. (If the combo we listed doesn't work, try another one; we sometimes got the code to work just tapping all four buttons at once.)

PlayStation Underground 1

COOL BOARDERS CODES (DISC 1): At the TECH Q & A menu, press □, △, ○.

CREDITS FMV (DISC 1): At the main menu, press □, △, ○, ✕.

GAMEDAY '97 EASTER EGGS (DISC 1): At the BEHIND THE SCENES menu, press and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 to call up four Easter Egg passwords (GD CHALLENGE, GENIUS, PINBALL, SCRAMBLER).

GOOFY FMV (DISC 1): At the DOWNLOAD STATION menu, press and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2, then press □ while still holding.

JET MOTO TIP (DISC 1): At the CODE BOOK menu, press △, △, △.

TWISTED METAL 2 CODES (DISC 1): At the main menu, press ○, △, □.

MUSIC VIDEO #1 (DISC 2): At the main menu, press ○, □, △, □, ○.

MUSIC VIDEO #2 (DISC 2): At the IN STORES NOW menu, press and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2, then press ✕ while still holding.

RESIDENT EVIL 2 SNEAK PEEK (DISC 2): At the COMING SOON menu, press △, △, △.

Space Jam

EXTRA OPTIONS: At the options menu, press and hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2, then press ✕ while holding. You call up hidden options which let you mess with the size of the players, the gravity of the ball, and choose one of several courts.

WCW vs the World

League Challenge
No Limit 1 Fall Match
DEAN MALENKO
VS
HULK HOGAN
SPIRIT
SPIRIT

OLD AND NEW COSTUMES: To wrestle as the "old" Hulk Hogan or Sting, press START to select him instead of ✕. Press START to pick Masahiro Chino and he wrestles while wearing an NWO shirt.

HIDDEN WRESTLERS: There are eight hidden characters in this action-packed body-slammer, raising the total number of potential grapplers to a stunning 60. Choose the League Challenge and fight as a Jr. Class wrestler. Win all six divisions with the same wrestler to fight a "boss" who's one of the hidden wrestlers. If you win all six divisions, you reveal a new "Super Jr." Division. Beat the Super Jr. Division to reveal Jaguar, the 59th wrestler. Now play through the six divisions with a heavyweight wrestler and fight the same six bosses. When you beat all six, you reveal the "Super Heavy" Division. Play through the Super Heavy and beat the Giant for your 60th wrestler. You

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IT'S A
STRATEGY
GAME.
THE STRATEGY IS TO
BLAST THE LIVING CRAP
OUT OF EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.
HAVE A NICE DAY
MASS
DESTRUCTION

can use the hidden wrestlers in any mode except the League Challenge. Look for the red arrows on the wrestler-select screen to find them.

Soul Blade

STAGE 1 0'12"56
PRESS 2P START
SEUNG MINA
ROCK

CHANGE THE COLOR OF SOPHITIA'S (AND SEUNG MINA'S) UNDIES: Here's the code du jour for the numerous perverts in our readership. When you press the **A**, **B**, or **K** button to select Sophitia, quickly press and hold **A**, **B**, or **K** until the fight begins. Sophitia's underwear will now be one of several unique colors. Seung Mina's undies can also be altered, but only if she's wearing her original (selected with ○) costume.

Tail of the Sun

THINGS TO SEE, PLACES TO GO: We can't tell you exactly where to find the goodies in Tail of the Sun, but we can tell you the general area of the game world and let you have the "fun" of finding them yourself. (Remember that the village is in the middle of the world.)
Desert: Animal Footprints, Dinosaur Bone, Oasis.
East Crescent Lake: Lovers (hmm?).
North Arctic Region: Eye Statue, Nose Statue.
Northeast Arctic Island: Ear Statue, Penguin.
Northeast Peninsula: Hand Statue, Tattoo Rock.
Northwest Arctic Island: Diamond (underground), Ear Statue, Eye Statue, Ice Mammoth.
Plains East of Village: Huge Ore, Picture Statue.
Plains North of Village: Huge Bone, Statue, Stonehenge, Village Ruins.
Plains Northeast of Village: Crystal Circle, Floating Rocks, Snakeskin.
Plains Northwest of Village: Deformed Plants, Mouth Statue, Tattoo Rock.
Plains South of Village: Dead Animal, Tattoo Rocks.
Plains Southeast of Village: Hip Statue (Underground), Monkey Statue, Two Breast Statues.
Plains West of Village: Dead Animals, "Stone of the Sun."
South Island: Dead Alien, Small Ball.
South Peninsula (East of Desert): Blocks, Foot Statue.
Southeast Island (East of Desert): Body Parts.
Southeast Peninsula: Cocoon (Underground), Foot Statue, Man/Woman Statues, Monkey Skeleton, Wall Painting (Underground).
Southwest Island: Submarine Temple.
West Island: Giant Footprint.
West Peninsula: Hand Statue.

CAVES: Look for cave entrances near the mountain ranges. The caves are the most interesting areas in the game, with unique creatures and cool rooms (one filled with mammoth tusks and another with a wall painting, to give two examples).
CULTURAL LEVEL: The village goes through three stages of development, atarting with small huts made of animal bones, advancing to teepees, and finally some high-quality thatch.
HUNTING: Throw items at animals to kill them at the start of the game, when your weapon is weak. Against faster animals, dash and attack. If you're fighting on a mountainside, attack from a higher position. If you're fighting near water, lure or chase the animal into the water to drown it. Attack mammoths from behind to avoid their rearing attacks.
MAMMOTH TUSKS: Run northwest from the village to find the mammoths in the arctic regions.
STONEHENGE: The orange stone in the middle of Stonehenge can kill an animal in one shot.

Wing Commander IV

BATTLE TACTICS
1. Long-range moving targets are very hard to hit with missiles, because enemy decoys work well. Get within 500 on the distance meter before opening fire.
2. Leech missiles and leech guns are great at slowing down speedy opponents.

ALL THE WORLD'S A TARGET.
MASS DESTRUCTION

If you're one of those sensitive, politically correct, in-touch-with-your-feminine-side men of the '90s, then you'd best stay far, far away from Mass Destruction.

Mass Destruction is pure testosterone. One hundred percent. 24 battlefields. 8 weapons of destruction. Flamethrowers. Guided missiles. The works.

Something gets in your way, blow it up. Something doesn't get in your way, blow it up anyhow. Put it this way, if it's a thinking man's game you want, go play chess.

www.massd.com

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NMS SOFTWARE

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TEEN T AGES 13+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PlayStation

GAME SHARK Codez

Welcome to the Game Shark section. Each month we'll list the newest and coolest codez right here for your cheat'n pleasure. Be warned: These codes won't work if you don't own a Game Shark, so don't be calling us and complaining that they don't work when you try to enter them in your game's password screen!

BATTLE STATIONS	
Infinite Energy P1	800C368C 0064
Infinite Energy P2	800C39BC 0064
BIG BASS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP	
Infinite Time	800977B8 0000
Small Lure Distance	8007B9CC ????
Large Lure Distance	8007B9CE ????
No Tension on Line	8007B9D0 0000
	8007B9D2 0000
**Note: Substitute any value for ????*	
COMMAND & CONQUER	
Infinite Money	8011B964 FFFF
THE CROW: CITY OF ANGELS	
Infinite Health	80087862 007F
CRYPT KILLER	
Infinite Lives P1	800FC174 0005
Infinite Smart Bombs P1	800FC17A 0005
Infinite Lives P2	800FC1D0 0005
Infinite Smart Bombs P2	800FC1D6 0005
Infinite Credits	8002278E 0601
INDEPENDENCE DAY	
Infinite Energy	800D0B78 0157
Infinite Missiles	800D0B96 6014
MECHWARRIOR 2	
Infinite Energy	80034B78 0000
	80034B7A 0000
MEGA MAN 8	
Infinite Energy	8015E282 2800
Invincible	8015E2AA 2D00
	8015E2AC 2D00
NBA SHOOT OUT '97	
Team 1 Infinite Turbo	8010DE3A 0006
	8010DE72 0006
	8010DEAA 0006
	8010DEE2 0006
	8010DE1A 0006
Team 2 Infinite Turbo	8010DF52 0006
	8010DF8A 0006
	8010DFC2 0006
	8010DFFA 0006
	8010E032 0006
Stop Shot Clock	800B3E28 029E
	800B3E30 0016
VANDAL-HEARTS	
Ash Infinite HP	8017F260 03E7
Ash Infinite MP	8017F26C 0063
Infinite Money	80140700 FFFF
WARHAMMER: SHADOW OF THE HORNED RAT	
GOD code	800DB9A2 0009

(Thanks to Terry Taylor for that one.)

3. Kill off leeched fighters before leaving your current nav point (unless you're ordered otherwise).
4. Concentrate on one fighter at a time.
5. When you have to destroy a capital ship, use dumbfire missiles and torpedoes.
6. If you're on a torpedo run, don't attack directly. Try to "corkscrew" in by rolling and banking slightly to dodge the turret fire and enemy craft on your tail.
7. The shields around bases and captail ships are supercharged and extend a large distance. Don't get too close!
8. If you have a Longbow or Avenger, you can whittle down your enemy's shields with your guns and then ram into the enemy to destroy him. This doesn't work with lighter ships.

Impact Racing

ALL WEAPONS: Enter the password ALL.TOOLEDUP (including the period) for all of the shooter thingers.

BONUS TRACKS: Enter the password BONUS.LEVELS (including the period) to play all six bonus tracks.

ENDING SEQUENCE: Enter the password JOURNEYS.END (including the period) to see what you should've earned the hard way, but which you've now spoiled for yourself.

FINAL TRACK: Enter the password ENDGAMELEVEL to play the final level.

INFINITE WEAPONS: Enter the password LOADSOFSTUFF for a never-ending supply of bullets, mines, et cetera

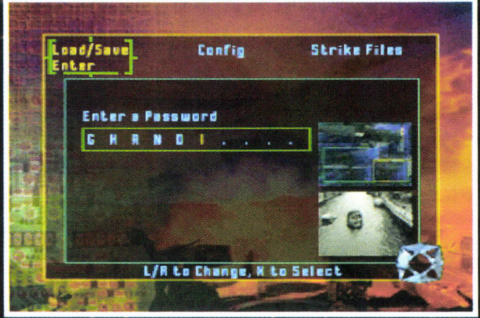
LEVEL SKIP: Enter the password RABBITBADGER to activate the skip. Press START to pause during a race and select the SKIP LEVEL option.

VR Baseball '97

HOMERUN!
404FT
OUTS 6
HOMERUNS 3
FARTHEST 417
DISTANCE 404

FIELD OF CORN To send your team to the cornfield, enter the game option screen from any mode of play. Move the highlight to Credits, and them press □, ○, □, ○, △. You will then be taken to the previous menu, and you will notice that the stadium name has a green color to it. Ths will indicate that the code has been successfully entered. You may then start the game as normal, and the Field of Corn will be the stadium you will be playing in.

Soviet Strike

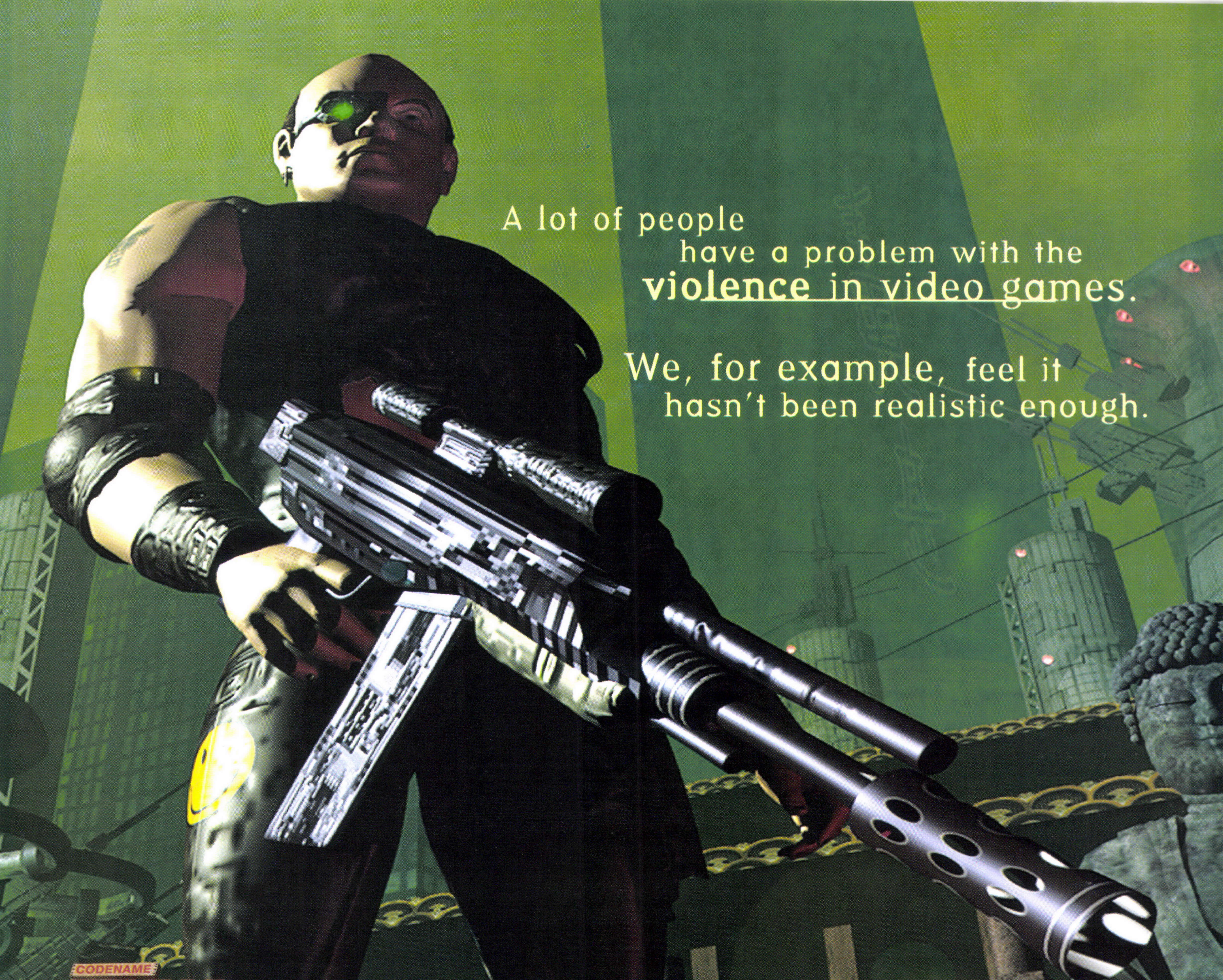


PASSWORDS O' PLENTY:
4 Attempts: SADISSA
7 Attempts: NOSFERATU
Double Damage: DRBENWAY
Infinite Ammo: STRANGELUV
Infinite Fuel: EARTHFIRST
Infinite Attempts: ELVISLIVES
Invincible Chopper: IAMWOMAN
Double Fuel Milage: VULTURE
Infinite Ammo, Infinite Fuel, Infinite Attempts: FUGAZI
Infinite Ammo, Infinite Fuel, Infinite Attempts, Double Damage: THEBIGBOYS
Infinite Ammo, Infinite Fuel, Invincible Chopper: MIDNIGHOIL
Worship the Chopper: GHANDI
Lynch the Chopper: ANGRYLOCAL
Peaceful World: QUAKER

The Crow

PASSWORDS O' PLENTY:
Use the "Enter Password" option:
Pier: △, ×, △, △, ○, □, △, □, ×, ○
Boat: ×, ×, ×, ×, △, □, ×, ×, ×, ○
Tomb: △, ○, △, ○, □, △, △, ○, ×, ○
Grave: ×, △, ×, △, □, ×, ×, △, □, ○
Church: △, △, △, △, ○, □, △, □, □, ○
Day o Dead: ×, △, ×, △, □, ○, ○, ×, □, ○
Club: △, ○, △, ○, ○, △, ×, ○, □, ○
Tower: ×, ×, ○, ×, □, □, ×, △, △, ○
Borderland: △, ×, ×, ×, ○, □, △, □, △, ○
Finale: ×, ×, ×, ○, □, □, ×, ×, △, ○
Debug mode: □, ×, □, ○, △, △, ○, □, ×, □
Stickman: △, △, ×, □, ○, ○, □, ×, △, △
Giraffe: ×, ○, △, ○, □, □, △, ○, ×, ○
FMV: △, △, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, △, △

Send all code submissions to:
EXECUTE
Dimension Publishing
1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
Foster City, CA 94404
or email us at: **d3@quake.net**


A lot of people
have a problem with the
violence in video games.
We, for example, feel it
hasn't been realistic enough.

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An evil corporation is threatening to kill off humankind, and it's up to you as Tenka, a war-hardened resistance fighter, to stop them.

The first shooter that lets you look up & down, jump and crouch while moving.

True 3D warzone with polygonal enemies in a rich, seamless environment.

Extensive arsenal of weaponry including laser sighted gun for targeted kills.

PlayStation
CODENAME
TENKA
MATURE
M
PSYGNOSIS

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"Trigger-happy fun" — *GamePro*

"Non-stop action and excellent graphics" — *Game Informer*

PSYGNOSIS™

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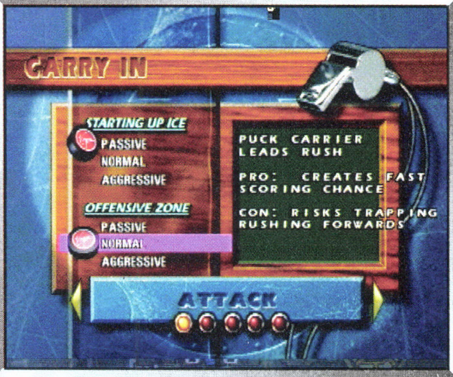
Spotlight on: Virgin Interactive entertainment

Virgin Interactive Entertainment (VIE) has a long history of success in the interactive entertainment field. The Irvine, California based publisher also maintains offices in London, Paris, Tokyo, Frankfurt and Hamburg. VIE was created in 1987 with the merger of Virgin Games and Mastertronics. The resulting Virgin Mastertronics became a subsidiary of the Virgin Group of Companies. In 1991, Virgin Mastertronic, Ltd. was sold to none other than Sega of Japan, but the publishing division was retained and so began the expansion of Virgin Games. Virgin Games was renamed Virgin Interactive Entertainment in 1993. As of July, 1994, VIE was acquired by Spelling Entertainment, which is a division of Viacom, Inc. and comprises Spelling Television, Spelling Films, Worldwide Enterprises, Republic Entertainment, Big Ticket Television and Hamilton Projects. The Irvine headquarters of VIE currently employs a staff of over 100. The location also houses Virgin Studios, their on-site development facilities comprised of design studios, a production stage and a 32-track, digital betacam. Virgin has been responsible for some of the biggest name 16-bit console titles of the past several years, including Aladdin, Robocop vs. Terminator, Demolition Man, The Lion King. On the PC side, Virgin has produced such hits as Dune, the Command & Conquer series and The 11th Hour: The Sequel to 7th Guest. And, through their recently established development arm, Burst, and other publishing partners, have been aggressive in the 32-bit marketplace with titles such as Spot Goes to Hollywood, NHL Powerplay '96, Grid Runner, Nanotek Warrior, The Divide: Enemies Within, Agile Warrior and Black Dawn.

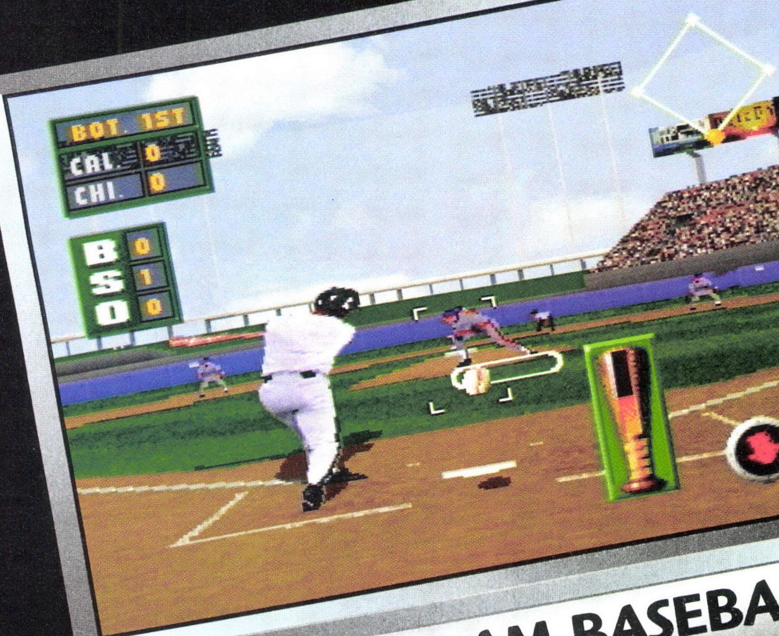
Grand Slam Baseball

As you'll see elsewhere in this issue, Virgin is one of many publishers releasing a baseball product this year. Grandslam Baseball is developed by Burst, the same folks who brought you Spot Goes to Hollywood. If you're wondering why everybody seems to be producing a baseball game these days, it's because there has yet to be a really good one produced. Many of the games have come close, but there's no baseball equivalent of GameDay '97 for the PlayStation. The first developer who comes up with one will make a fortune. Let's face it, the last really good baseball game was World Series Baseball for the Genesis. With that in mind, expect to see a lot of that classic 16bit gameplay in Virgin's game, along with some new technology like the pitching power/accuracy meter, which works very similar to the power meters found in most golf games. addi-



NHL POWERPLAY '98

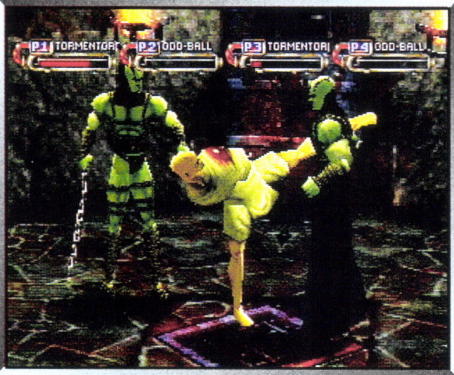
NHL POWERPLAY '98



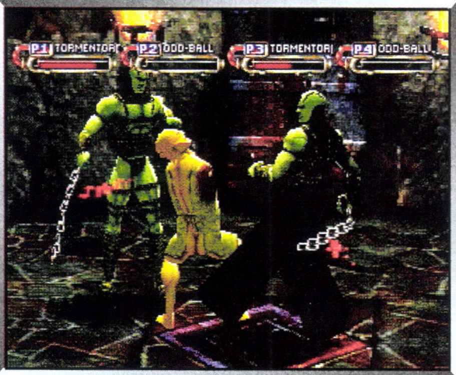
GRAND SLAM BASEBALL

NHL POWERPLAY '98

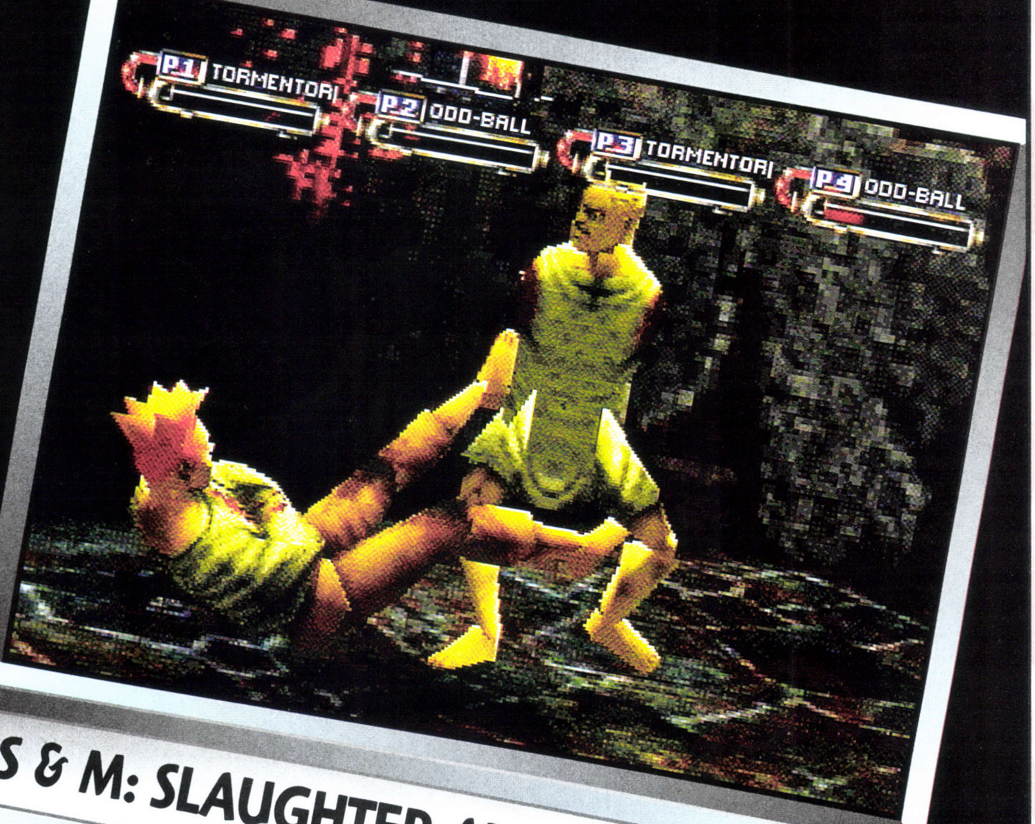
NHL POWERPLAY '98



S & M: SLAUGHTER AND MUTILATION



S & M: SLAUGHTER AND MUTILATION



S & M: SLAUGHTER AND MUTILATION

tionally, there's a batting power meter that works like the kicking meters in most football games. If you're looking for a realistic batting challenge, this is it. Although there's no MLB license in the game, it does carry a player's license, and a complete statistical data base. read on for a complete review.

NHL Powerplay '98

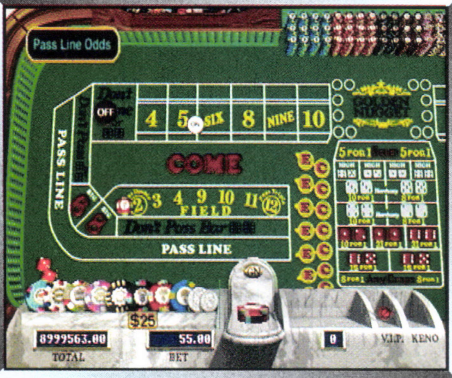
If there's one thing you can count on in the video game business, it's sequels; especially with sports titles. Just as there are close to ten baseball titles due to be released this year, five of which will be sequels, hockey fans will get to share in that experience as well. We've already seen Sony's second effort and, come this September, we'll get a look at the sequel to Virgin's very successful NHL Powerplay 96. If you recall in our July '96 issue, we gave Virgin's game a Gold rating, but complained about the statistical database, or lack thereof. This year, with NHL Powerplay '98, you'll be able to track stats over an entire season, as well as an individual game. Additionally, you'll get much closer to the ice this year and, when in scoring position, the camera will zoom in so it's just you and the goalie head-to-head. It sounds as though the team at Radical Entertainment has set out to fix the few minor flaws of the original game. If they're successful, we may have the best hockey game of all time on our hands. Stay tuned, we'll let you know!

S & M: Slaughter and Mutilation

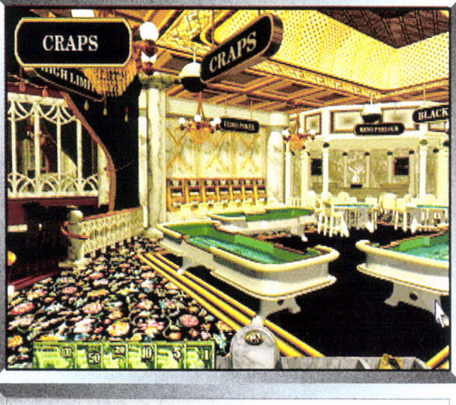
"S & M: Slaughter and Mutilation" (working title) is one of Virgin's more unique games due out this year (and, no, Lara Croft isn't included in the game). Fasten your seat belts boys and girls, 'cause this one is going to surprise even the most jaded gamer. The basic story line here reads something like a David Lynch screenplay. S & M is a 3D fighter using human mutants as the characters. Instead of the "classic" combo moves of the more traditional fighters, this one encourages you to use the dark side and attempt decapitations, amputations and disembowelments. You can actually use the body parts of your competitors as tools to continue pulverizing them . Why am I suddenly reminded of a certain Monty Python movie? Think of S & M as Loaded goes 3D fighting, with just a little more humor. The game supports four players simultaneously, via multi tap, and comes with more than enough sick and twisted characters to keep even the most hard core chicken worshiper happy. The whole concept here is stuff as much gore into the game as the folks at Sony will let you get away with. This promises to be a very interesting title. I guess ol' Joe Lieberman will have a new target. We're just glad it's not us.

Golden Nugget

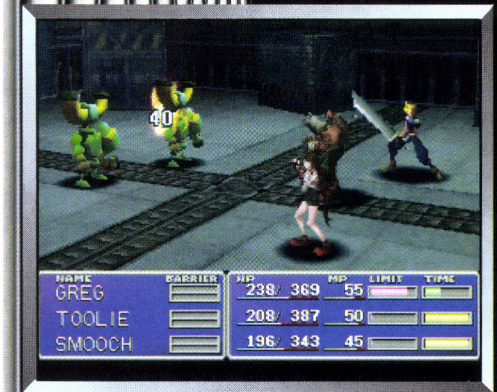
What can be said about Golden Nugget? It's the first American gambling game for the PlayStation. It has just about every known game you would expect to find in a casino, from slots to craps, including the yawn-inducing Keno. It's actually a conversion of Virgin's popular PC title, although, it's been streamlined a bit for the PlayStation's audience to the point that the cheesy, but kind of cool, Full Motion Video back story of Adam West, infiltrating the Nugget, has been removed — poor guy can't get a break. Look for ultra-detailed, accurate recreations of the Golden Nugget's layout, down to the actual carpet design, and plenty of hours worth of gambling action. We expect Golden Nugget to fill a niche that has heretofore been left empty in the PlayStation market.

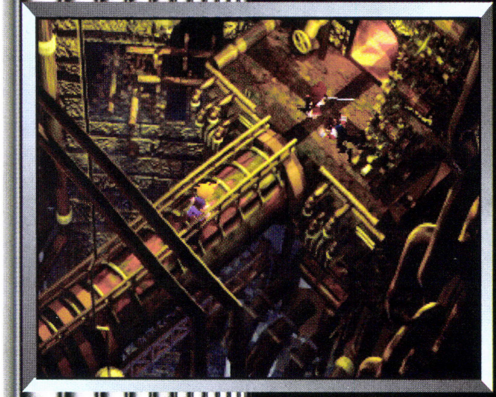


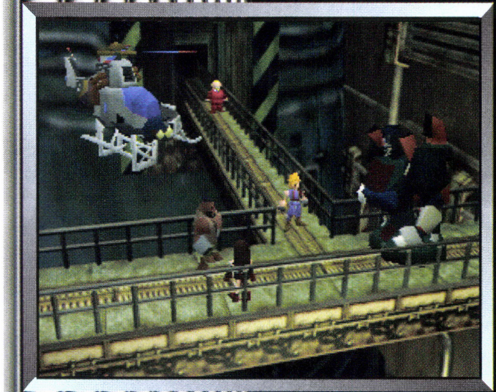
GOLDEN NUGGET

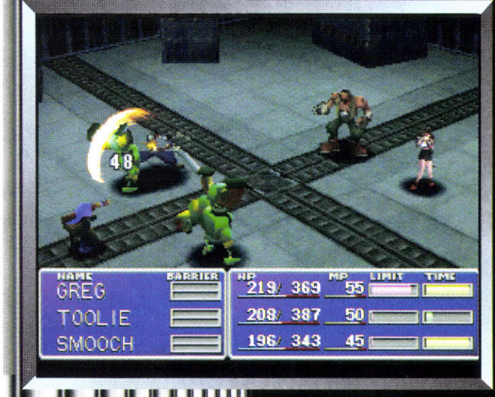


GOLDEN NUGGET







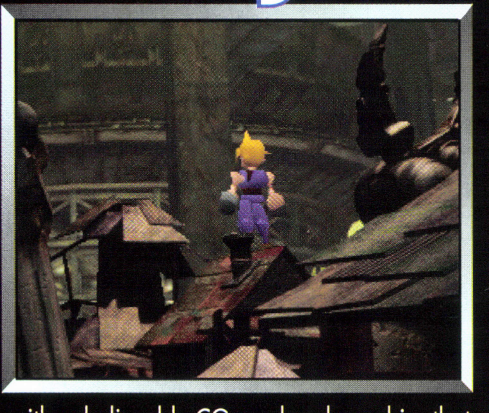


Final Fantasy VII

What's so special about September 7th? If you own a PlayStation and you're into RPGs, the answer should be on the tip of your tongue... If you guessed that it's the official U.S. launch date of Square's/Sony's highly publicized, eagerly anticipated and downright amazing masterpiece of an RPG, Final Fantasy VII, then, my friend, you know your stuff. As this is really the first time we've covered the game, (to date, only the Japanese version is available and the first of the American translated discs won't be ready, for the press, until the end of April) and its release is still a good five months away, were treating this article as a small, but substantial first-look to what could be the first million-unit-selling RPG ever, in the history of American video games.

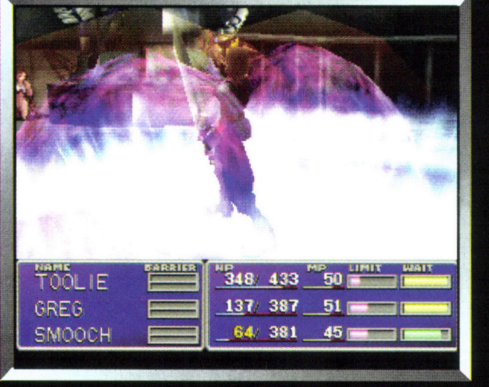
The Final Fantasy series has been on-going since the early days of the NES and Nintendo has maintained a virtual monopoly on the series until the recent surprise announcement that SquareSoft had chosen the PlayStation (over the N64) as the next gaming platform of choice. This was due to the fact that Square felt the N64 cartridge offered too many limitations, and the game could only be done on CD — due to the immense storage capabilities of its format. As it is, the final product spans three PlayStation CDs in total, giving the player literally hundreds of hours of gameplay. Ah, and what sweet and engrossing gameplay it is.

If there was ever a comparison that could be made between a game and a big-budget movie, FFVII is it. The storyline is ultra-complex and immense, with many unexpected plot twists and turns (which we'll go into greater detail in next month's issue). The battles are fought out in traditional real-time Final Fantasy style, but this time in 3D. While in this mode, the special effects, especially some of the magical spells, are truly mind-boggling (if you've played the 15-minute demo on the Tobal No. 1 disk, and checked out the Leviathan, then you know what I'm talking about). The typical over-head exploration mode has been replaced with unbelievable CG-rendered graphics that cannot be comprehended or appreciated until you've seen them moving on screen and in person. In addition, there are tons of animated SGI-rendered cut-scenes which blend seamlessly from movie to gameplay. Production values, like these, have yet to be seen on any other PlayStation title and it's true that Square had over 300 people working on the project with 100+ Silicon Graphic Workstations endlessly rendering away, at any given time during the development cycle.

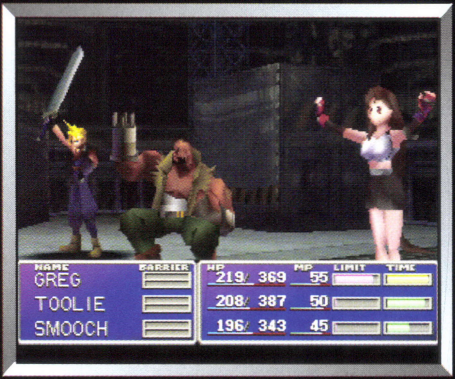


With all that FFVII has to offer, will it be the one ground breaking titles that will transcend the dedicated RPG hobbyist following and capture a wider, mass-market audience? Square's sure of it, Sony's betting on it and only time will tell. Until that time, we will continue with plenty of on-going coverage of this special game.

Greg

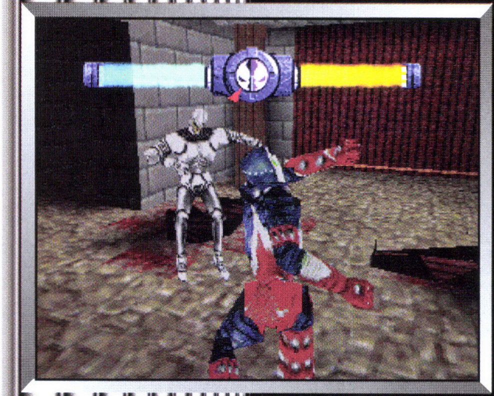


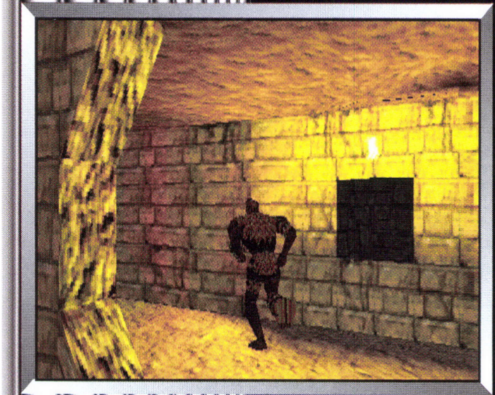
EXCLUSIVE

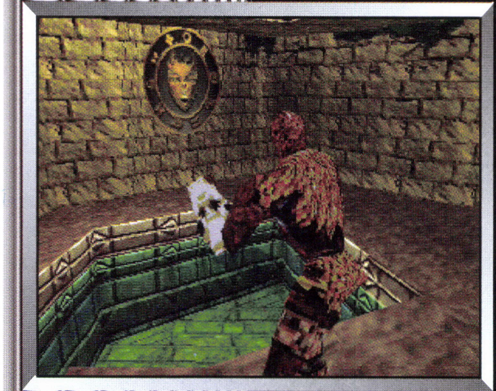


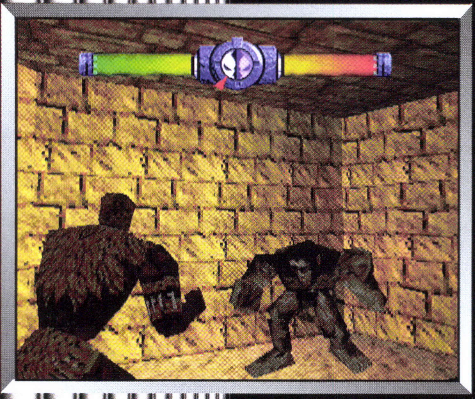
NAME	BARRIER	HP	MP	LIMIT	TIME
GREG		219/ 369	55		
TOOLIE		208/ 387	50		
SMOOCH		196/ 343	45		

NAME	BARRIER	HP	MP	LIMIT	WAIT
GREG		194/ [illegible]	55		
TOOLIE		281/ 409	50		
SMOOCH		164/ 362	45		







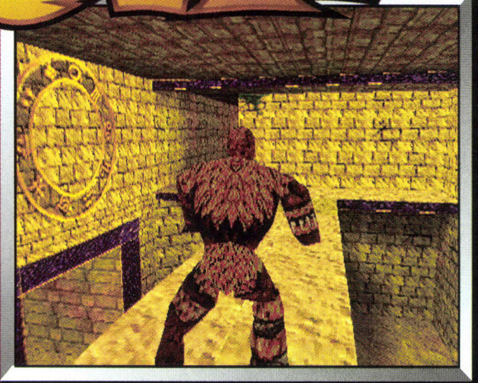


SPAWN

Sony's San Diego studios, the developers behind their successful sports line (you know, NFL GameDay, NHL Face Off, NBA Shoot-Out) have taken on the task of bringing Todd McFarlane's dark and brooding super-hero creation, from the pages of one of the most successful comic books of all-time, to the video screens and televisions of today's PlayStation gamers. Although the game is currently early-on in the development process, (tentatively scheduled for release this August) Sony took the time to bring an assortment of video game editors down to their studios for an early look at the game, and then onto Phoenix, Arizona, where we had the opportunity to meet and talk with Todd himself.

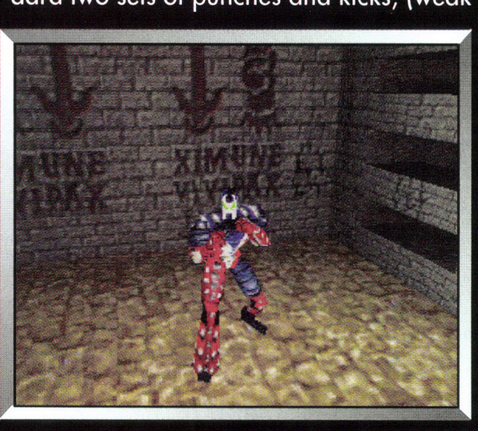
Making a great game from an already established license is no easy feat — especially when you have a character that has a huge, almost fanatical following of fans. The developers down in San Diego have been very sensitive to this fact from the get go. With this in mind, they've been taking their time with the game, (it's been in development since February of last year) while involving Todd in every step of the way, in an effort to ensure that it will not only appeal to Spawn fans, but deliver an awesome gaming experience. The result, at this point, is a game that mixes third person, 3D action/exploration and puzzle solving, (similar to that of Tomb Raider) and detailed one-one-one fighting, (a la Tekken) with dark and horrific environments and characters (Resident Evil) — certainly not bad company to keep!

The story of the game is loosely based on Spawn's comic book universe, where the ultimate goal is to make your way to the Tower of Hell in an effort to restore your lost humanity and regain your soul. In doing this, Spawn must make his way through three time periods: Savage, Medieval, and Street (the present).

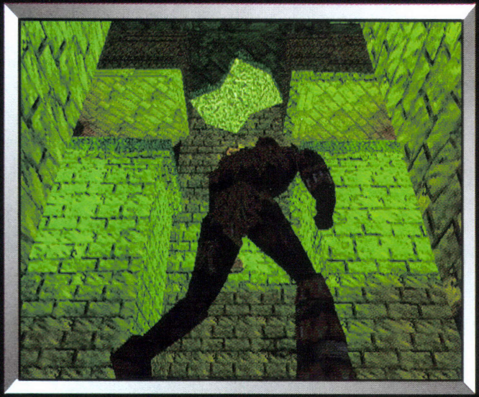


Each period will be represented with a different Spawn character/costume, with the Savage Spawn being an all-new creation that has never appeared in the comic. Fans of the comic will be happy to know most of their favorite enemies have been incorporated into the game, including Angela, the Violator, the Vaporizer and the Redeemer, as well as a few from Todd's successful toy line.

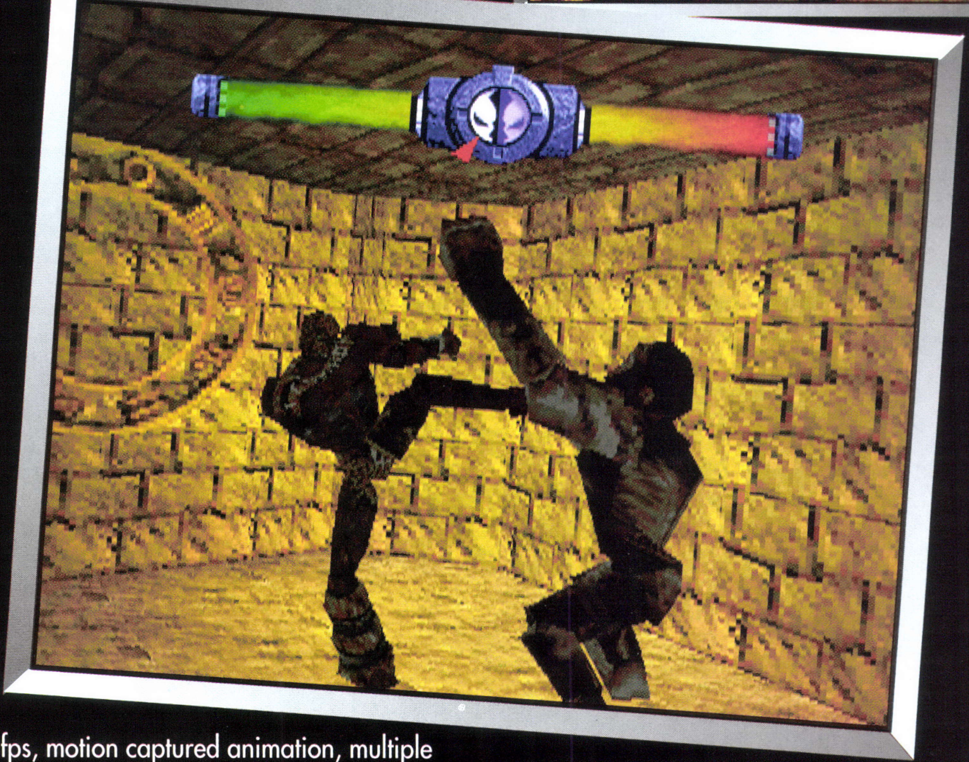
While the game can be broken down into exploration and fighting categories respectively, they will be blended seamlessly. When you encounter an enemy, Spawn's ever-present lifeforce bar appears. At this point the fighting engine takes over which, when all is said and done, promises to rival that of the Tekken series. You can expect a full set of fighting moves from the standard two sets of punches and kicks, (weak



EXCLUSIVE



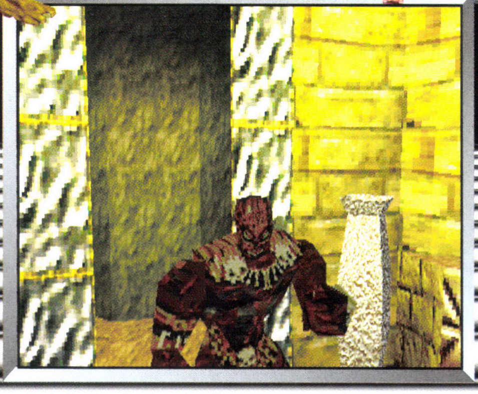
/strong) to the ability to block, jump, crouch, run, and sidestep, as well as complex combos and the like. Spawn will also have the ability to pick up and use weapons such as clubs, swords, guns, etc. (dependent upon what time period he's in). One of the coolest moves we saw, while we were there, was the always messy but fun, "pull a limb off your opponent and then bludgeon them with it attack." And just like the comic, if you pull off special moves such as his magical spells, it will sap some of his energy. Spawn will also have his cape and chains, but they will be temporary power-ups rather than always available. The exploration mode will encompass huge levels that take place in indoor and outdoor environments and will incorporate classic gaming/puzzle solving elements, such as throwing switches, finding keys to open locked doors, warping to different levels, etc., with more complex puzzles that have yet to be implemented.

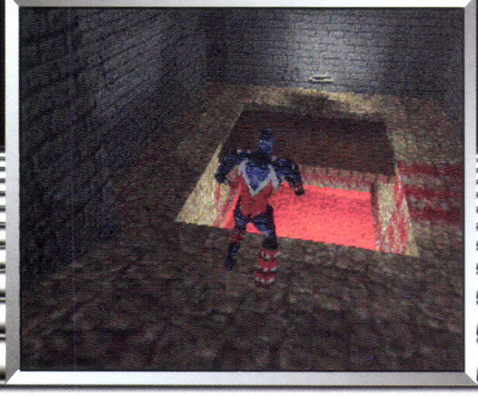


All of this will be polished off with some pretty nifty hardware and software tricks including real-time light sourcing, tinting and color cycling effects, rippling water, 30 fps, motion captured animation, multiple camera angles, ambient/atmospheric sound effects, and audio steaming off of the CD to reduce load times — all the while displayed in the PlayStation's seldom-used 512 x 240 high-resolution mode.

With the mega-popular comic book, the advent of a major motion picture on the horizon, as well as the highly publicized animated series debuting on HBO, Spawn, the video game has huge hit potential. We're very excited about the gaming possibilities that Spawn presents and will be featuring it, along with plenty more information and screen-shots in next month's issue.

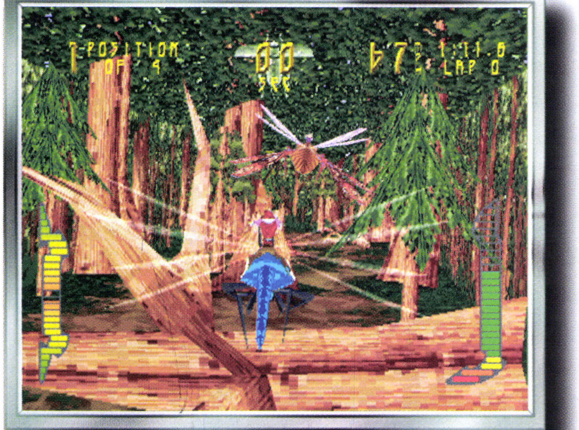
Greg

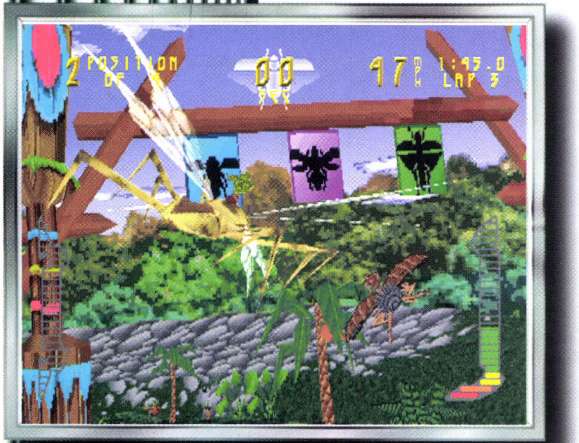


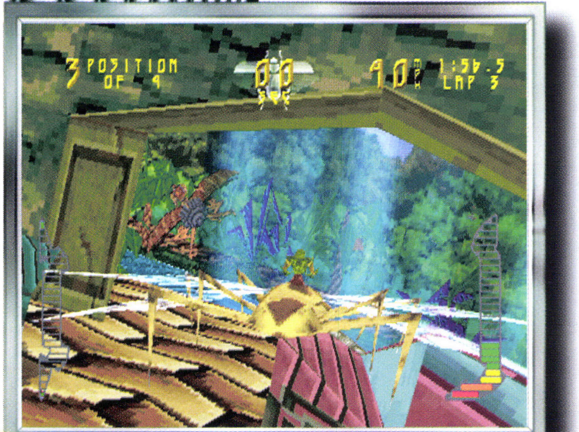


BUG RIDERS

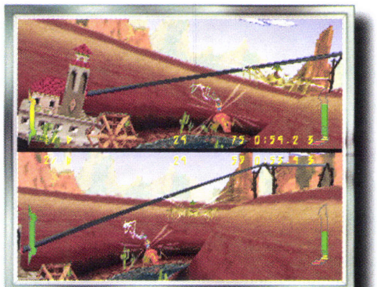
GT INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE OCTOBER

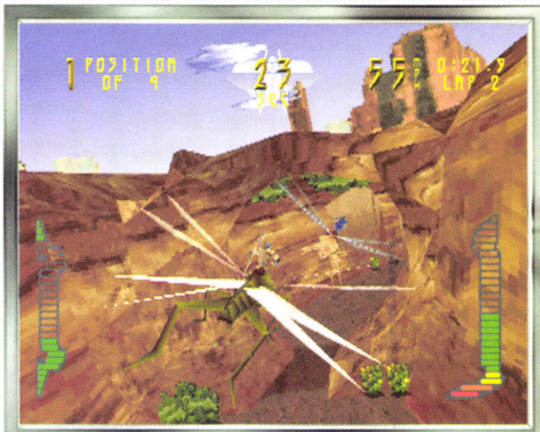


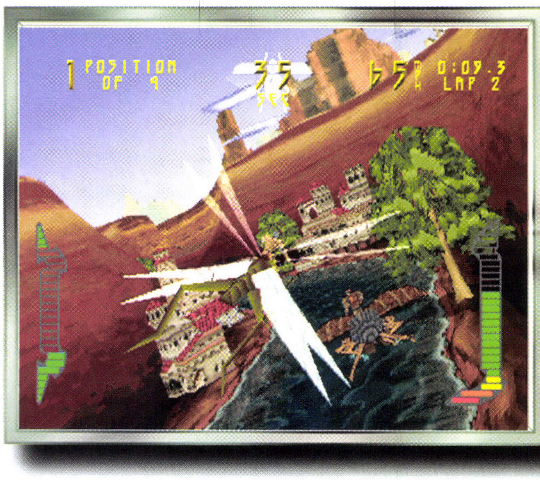


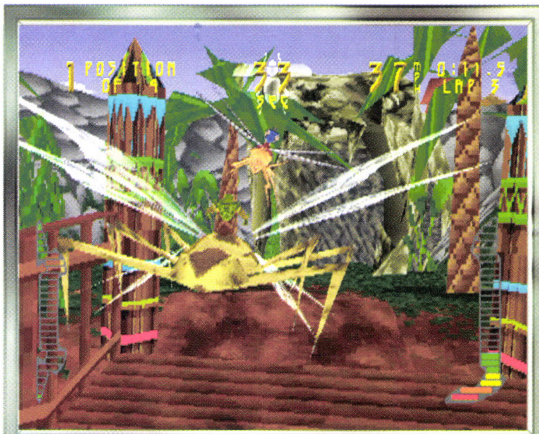


Among the numerous titles GT Interactive currently has under its sleeve, Bug Riders could be considered the most unusual of the bunch. In this departure from the typical racing game, players find themselves atop giant bugs, in an all-out race for victory and ownership of the Kingdom of Entymion. In this mystical land, racing atop these bugs isn't just a way of life, it's a means of survival. As the story goes: Entymion's Emperor, Leptus the First, is on his deathbed and the people must choose his successor according to ancient custom and law. This is accomplished via the Great Race, where entrants battle it out, in each of the Five Manors of the Royal Court, until one rider emerges victorious. Only through careful navigation of the treacherous courses, absolute mastery of the mount and skilled use of their weapons, will players be able to defeat the Royal Court and earn the right to replace Leptus as Emperor of Entymion. Bug Riders will feature true 3D racing, with the ability to pass above, below, and to the left and right of your opponents, 22 different characters, each with their own unique mount, traits and characteristics, 2 player, split-screen simultaneous play, hi-res graphics running at 30 fps, and six different "tracks", complete with branching courses and evolving environments.



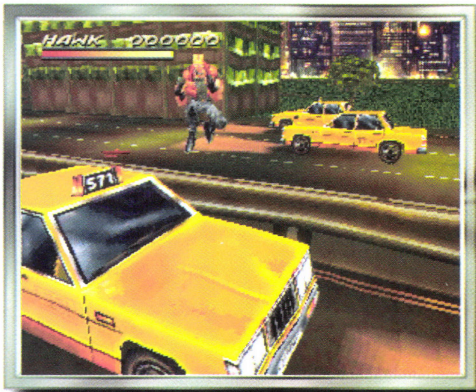






FIGHTING FORCE

EIDOS • AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER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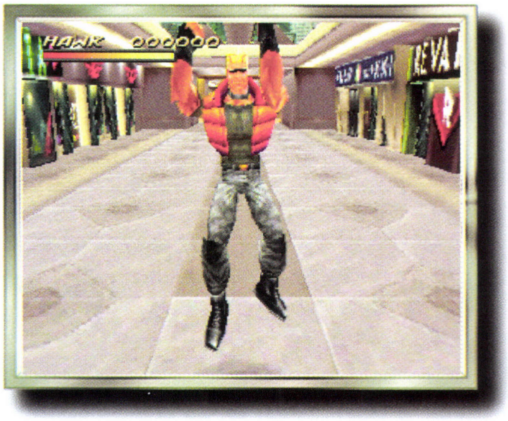
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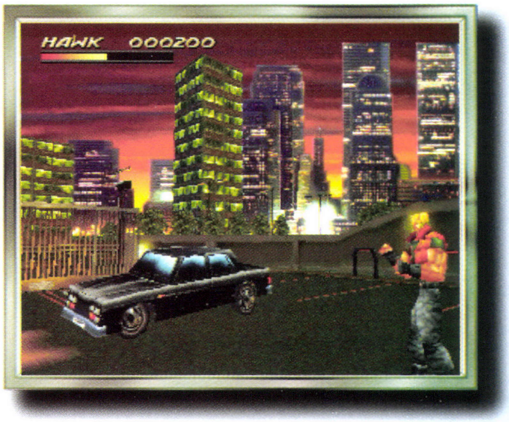
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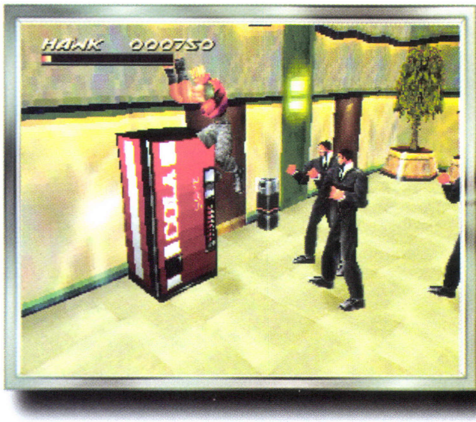
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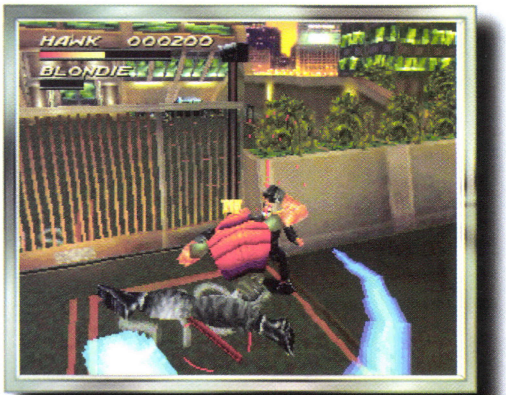
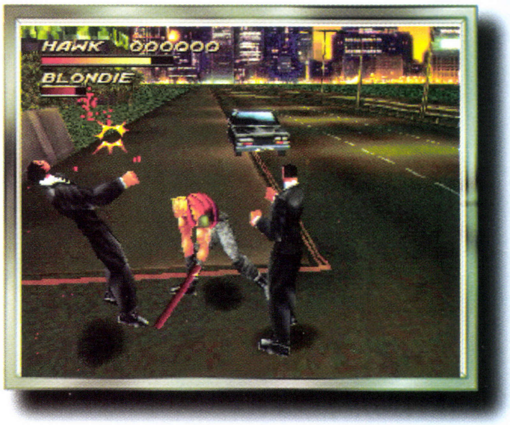

HAWK 000200
BLONDIE

Eidos and Core — two names that have become a major force in the gaming industry in, what seems, a short period of time. After the unbelievable Tomb Raider, what could be next from these talented folks? If you've been keeping up with EX*NEWS* then you probably already know. If not, then feast your eyes on the screen-shots littered around this page for an early look at their next effort, Fighting Force. Due out around September, Fighting Force is a true 3D, free roaming fighting game that loosely shares its roots with games like Final Fight, or more closely, Sega's Streets of Rage. In fact, it was rumored, at one point, that this was going to be a 3D Streets of Rage for the Saturn, but the deal didn't go through. (Gee, I wonder why?) Although the comparisons can be made to these games, Fighting Force promises to offer more than the traditional side-scrolling beat-em-up, with a huge arsenal of up to 50 moves for each of the four main characters, that is said to rival that of Tekken 2. Although it's a bit too early to hand down a verdict, our predictions are that this is going to be a big hit this Fall. We'll keep you up to date as we get new versions of this incredible looking fighting game.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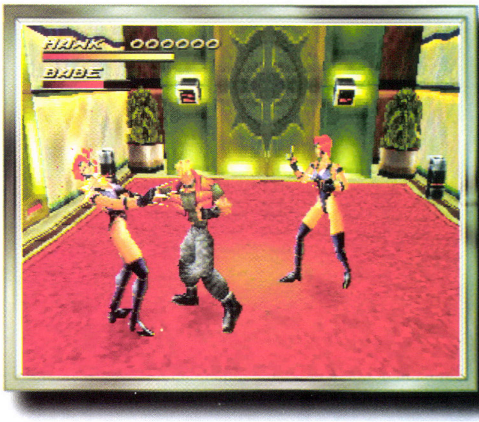
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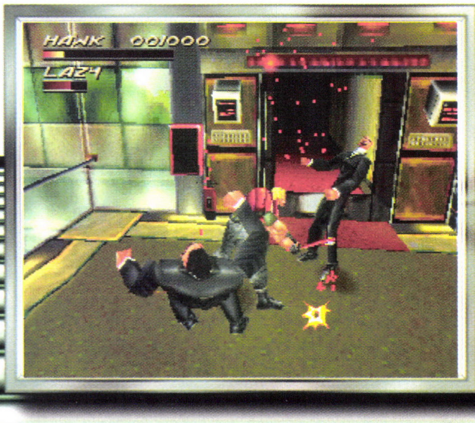
BABE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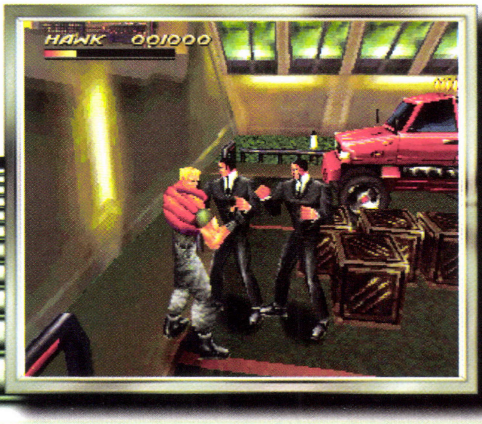
LAZY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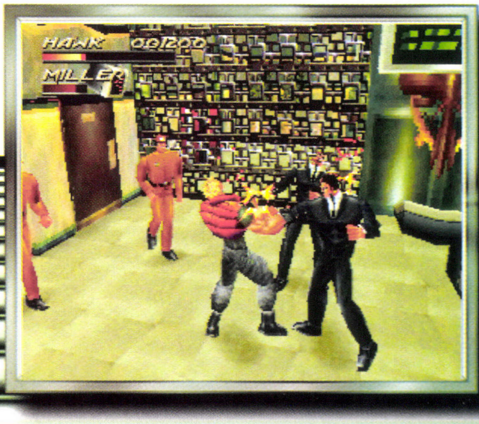
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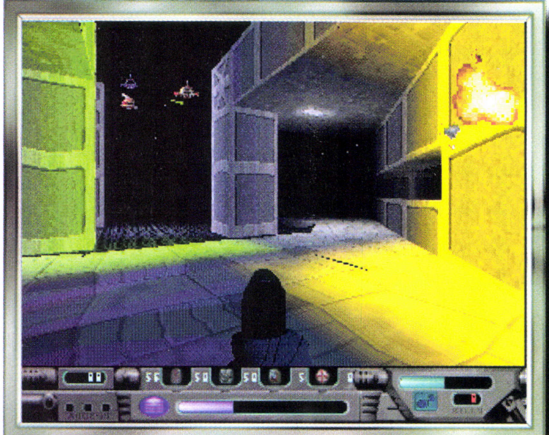
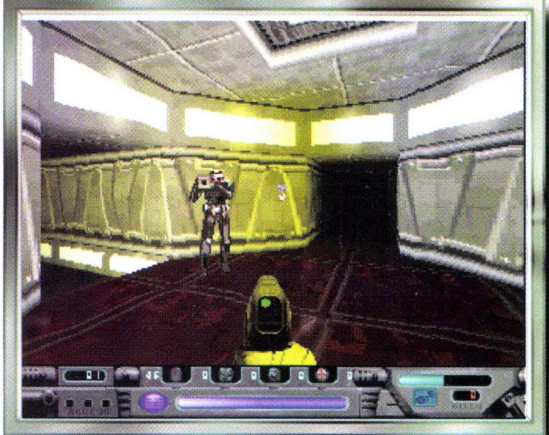
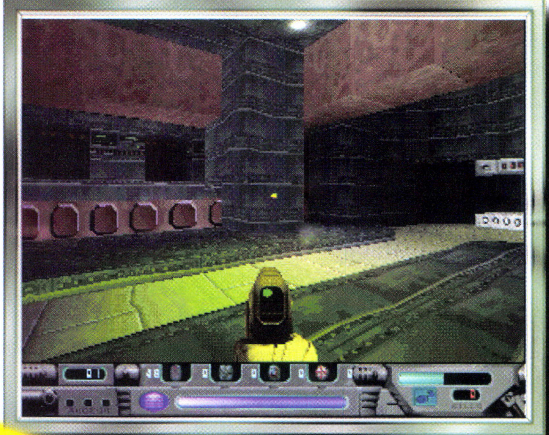
MILLER

REBEL MOON

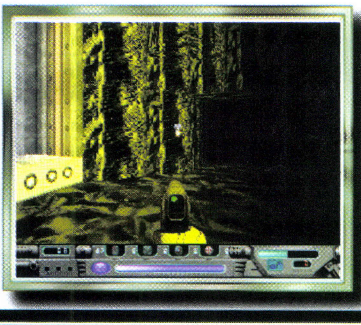
GT INTERACTIVE • AVAILABLE SUMMER

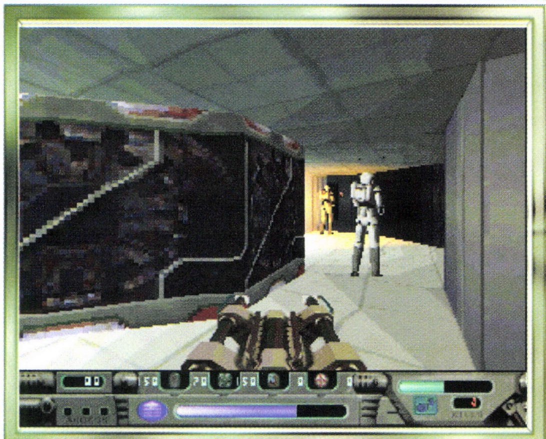


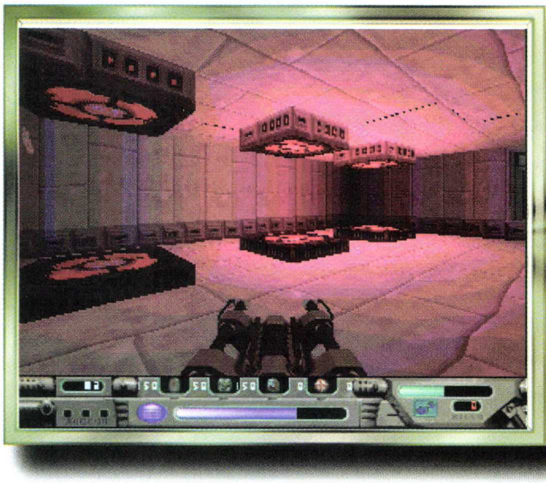


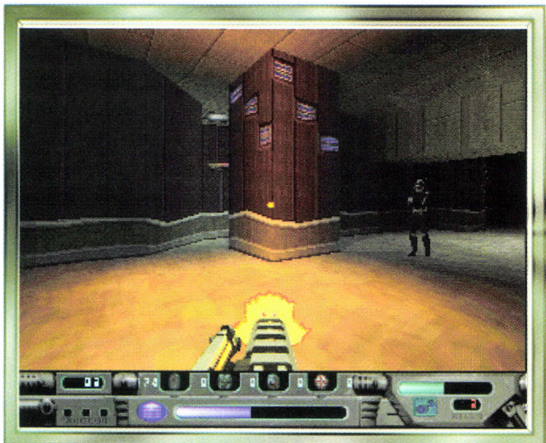


It wouldn't be too far from the truth to state that GT Interactive seems to have the corner on the next generation of first-person shooters for the PlayStation this year. What with the upcoming Duke Nuke 'em 3D, Quake, Barbed Wire, Hexen and now Rebel Moon, we pretty much feel they've got it covered. So, what's different and unique about Rebel that will make you want to go out and buy it? Well, that type of info will have to wait for the review in an upcoming issue, as we haven't actually had any "hands on" time with the PS version of the product. What we can tell you is that Rebel Moon is based on the Pocket Books' sci-fi novel of the same name and revolves around a complex story line. The game, when it is done, promises to feature 27 levels of intense shooting in silky smooth environments, a variety of mission types — ranging from the typical "kill everything in your path and find the exit" to more stealth-like operations such as defensive maneuvers and infiltration, unique gameplay features — such as variable gravity combat, and the ability to fly around the environment with a jet-pack, and dramatic lighting effects that send laser blasts and jet trails across the screen. Rebel Moon will be available this Summer.



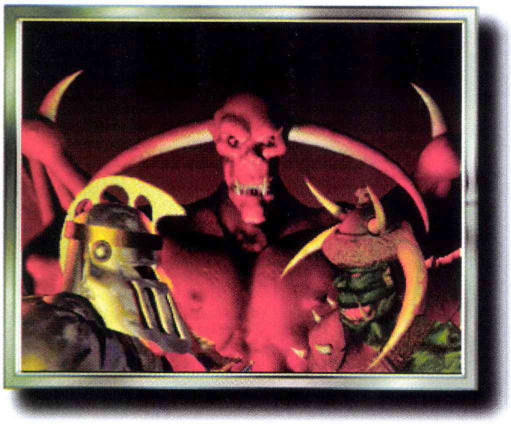


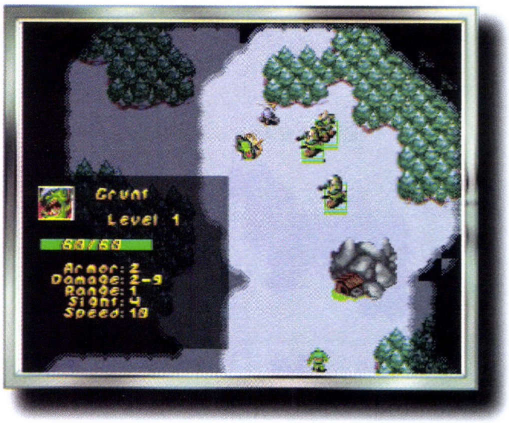




WARCRAFT II

EA • AVAILABLE JUNE

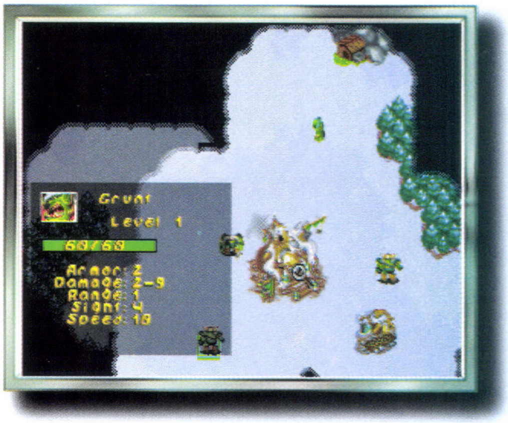




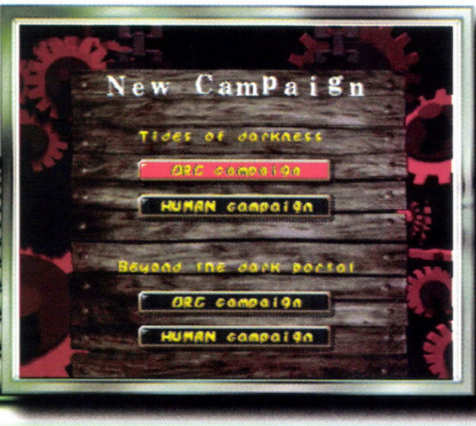
Grunt
Level 1
60/60
Armor: 2
Damage: 2-9
Range: 1
Sight: 4
Speed: 10

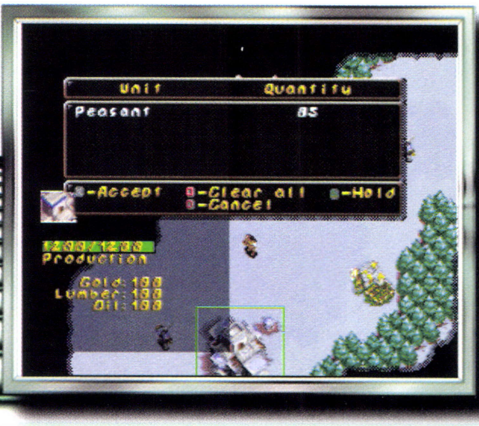
STROMGARDE
DALARAN
TARREN MILL
DUN MODR
GILNEAS
SOUTHSHORE
HILLSBRAD
TOL BARAD
KHAZ MO
GRIM BAT
CRESTFALL
KUL TIRAS
TOMB OF SARGERAS

The gap between PCs and PlayStations continues to slowly shrink as more and more of the popular PC titles are ported, converted and enhanced over to the little grey box. The latest and greatest, Blizzard's addictive, strategy-laden, WarCraft II: The Dark Saga, is tentatively scheduled for a June release by none other than Electronic Arts. Extremely popular with network gamers, Warcraft II was a huge hit on the PC last year, and even though there is no network capabilities on the PlayStation, EA hopes to capitalize on the success of the PC version. The game is set in a medieval fantasy world where Human and Orc forces battle over land, sea and air. The game offers a total of 52 scenarios from both WarCraft II and the Dark Portal expansion pack and, in addition, EA has thrown in more than 90 customizable maps. Some of the features included in this game are: an intuitive user interface, specifically redesigned for the PlayStation, new rendered CG scenes, tight AI that challenges and counters the player's every move, map and character control pop-ups and auto-build and fast action modes. We should have more for you in next month's issue.

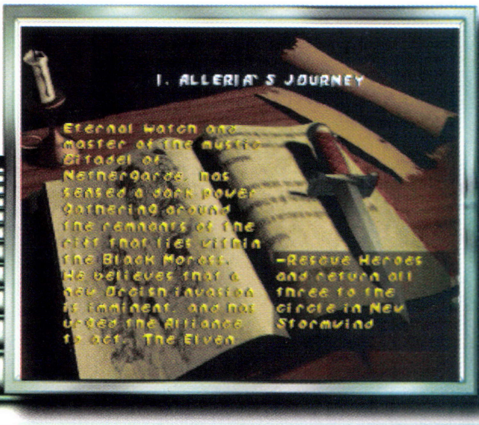


Grunt
Level 1
60/60
Armor: 2
Damage: 2-9
Range: 1
Sight: 4
Speed: 10


New Campaign
Tides of darkness
ORC campaign
HUMAN campaign
Beyond the dark portal
ORC campaign
HUMAN campaign



Unit Quantity
Peasant 85
-Accept -Clear all -Hold
-Cancel
1200/1200
Production
Gold: 100
Lumber: 100
Oil: 100



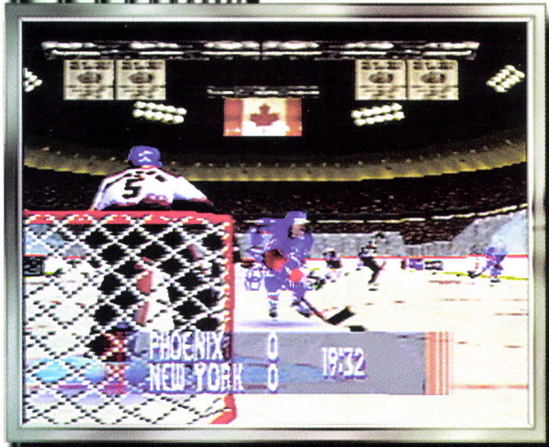
1. ALLERIA'S JOURNEY

Eternal watch and master of the mystic Citadel of Nethergarde, has sensed a dark power gathering around the remnants of the rift that lies within the Black Morass. He believes that a new Orcish invasion is imminent, and has urged the Alliance to act. The Elven

-Rescue Heroes and return all three to the circle in New Stormwind

NHL BREAKAWAY '98

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE AUGUST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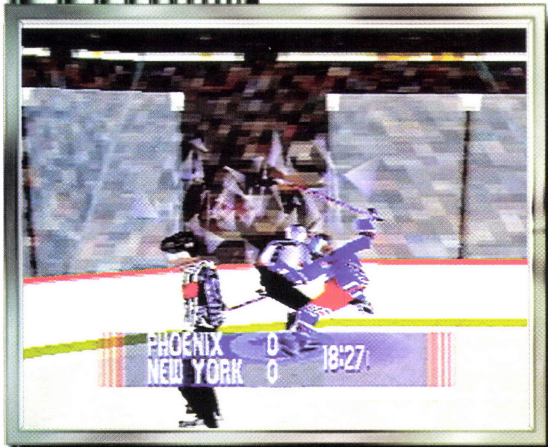
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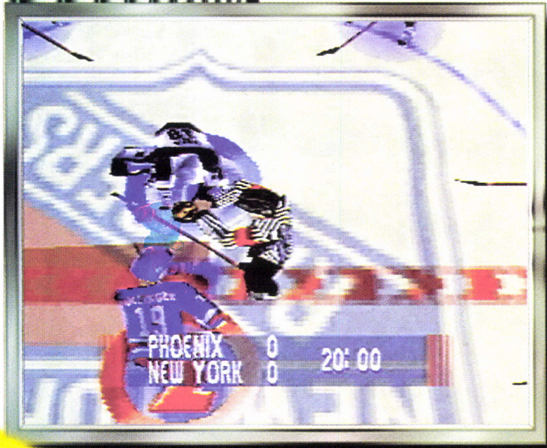
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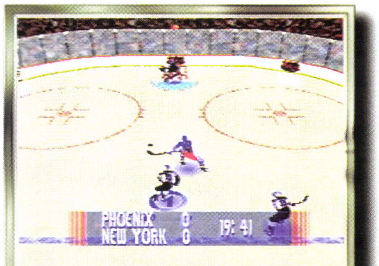
Acclaim, in an effort to increase their base of sports titles, looks to get into the hockey arena with the release of NHL Breakaway '98. Not to be outdone by EA or Sony, Acclaim is promising stunning visuals, detailed animations, and tons of options. From our first glimpse a few months back, we were impressed, and the latest update we have shows that hard work will pay back big dividends. Some of the features in NHL Breakaway '98 include the ability to control an offensive player that doesn't have the puck, smooth motion captured polygon characters and a cool new system called "Momentum based checking", that takes into account individual players' weights and speeds, as they crush their opponents into the boards and sometimes break the glass. To account for the players personal characteristics, each character has their own size based on height and weight. You will also find both NHL and NHLPA licenses, the ability to trade and create players, and a little something from Sony's book, button-assigned passing. The game looks good now, and we can't wait to get our hands on a reviewable copy. We'll keep in touch.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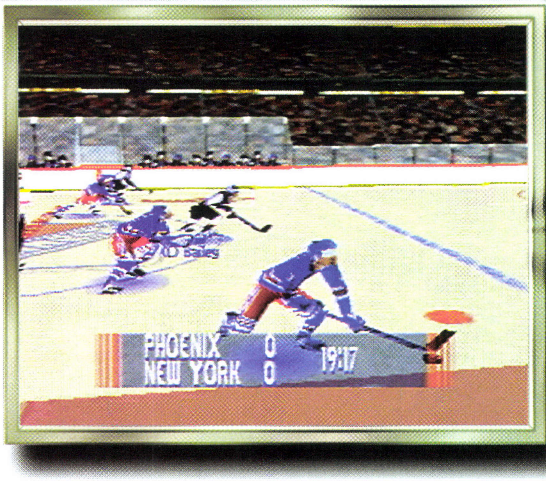
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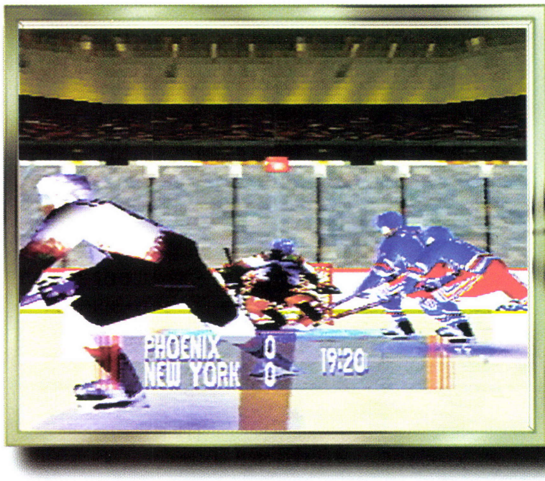
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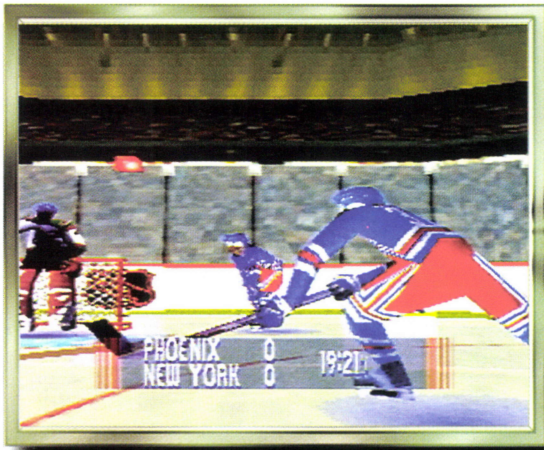
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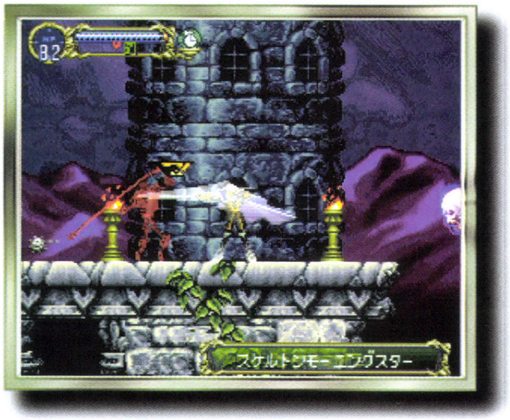
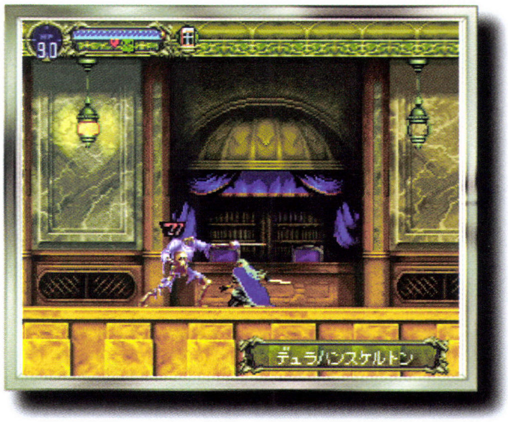
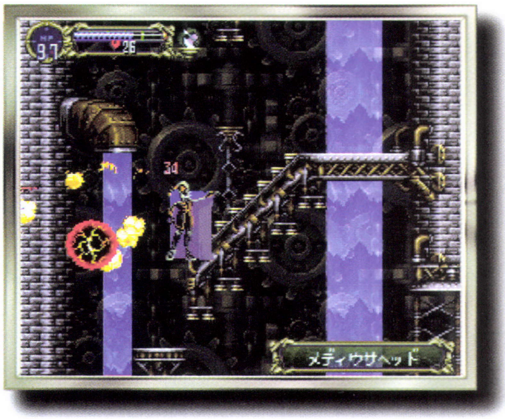
CASTLEVANIA

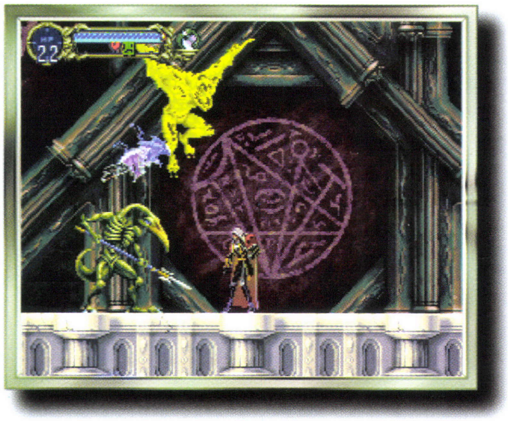
KONAMI • AVAILABLE FALL

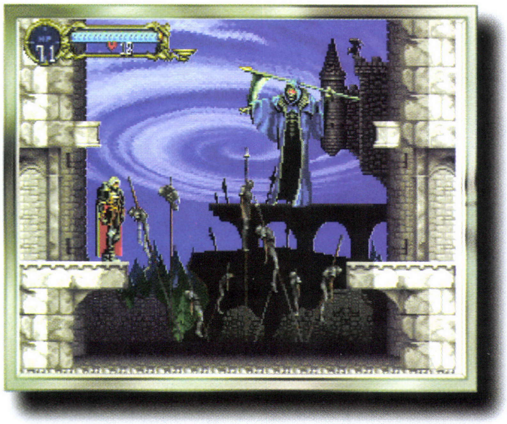


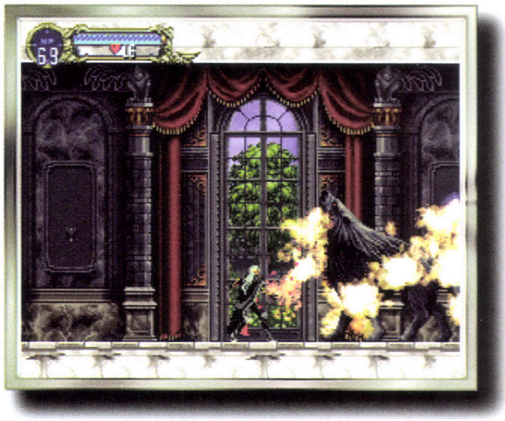


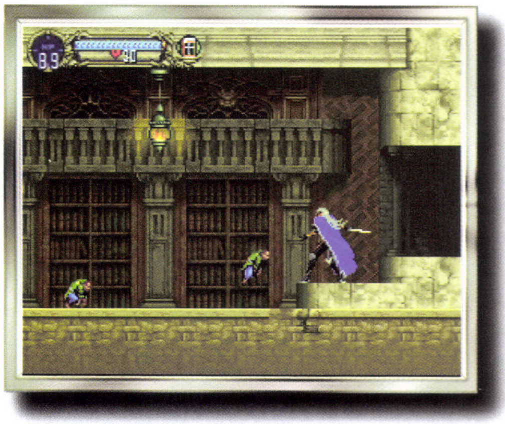


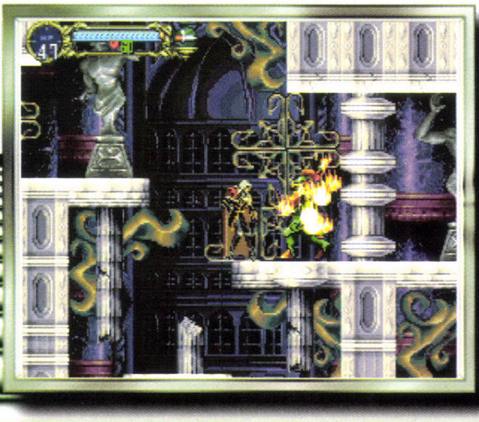
2D or not 2D; this seems to be the question on most publisher's minds when it comes to developing games for the 32 and 64-bit systems. The old-school loves 'em while the new generation of gamers might consider their look and play a little outdated. Enter Konami's Castlevania: Symphony of the Night, the 6th installment (not counting the GameBoy titles) in the on-going series, and the first to debut on Sony's PlayStation. While Konami has chosen to stick with their 2D formula, Castlevania has all sorts of enhancements and gameplay features that showcase not only the PlayStation's hardware, but the mass storage capabilities of the CD-ROM format. Since the game is tentatively scheduled for a Fall release, we will delve into the storyline at a later date; so instead, we'll give you an idea of the epic size and scope of the game. Playing much like the second Castlevania, Symphony combines traditional action with plenty of adventure and role playing. There's puzzles to be solved, items to be purchased, weapons and armor to be equipped, and experience points to be gained in order to level-up. In addition, the game features huge, non-linear levels that must be revisited, as the game progresses, in order to complete them. We plan to continue with on-going coverage up until the release of the game this September/October.

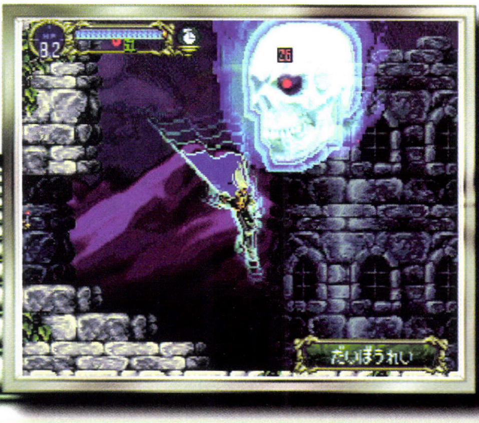


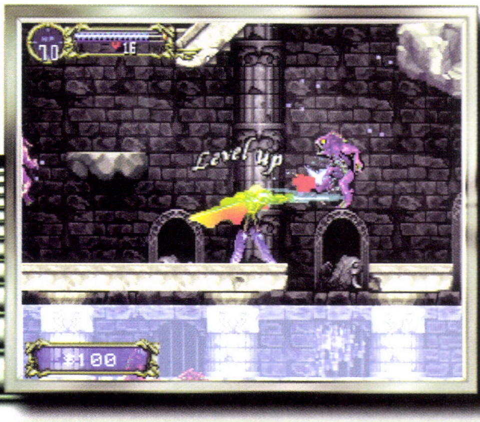






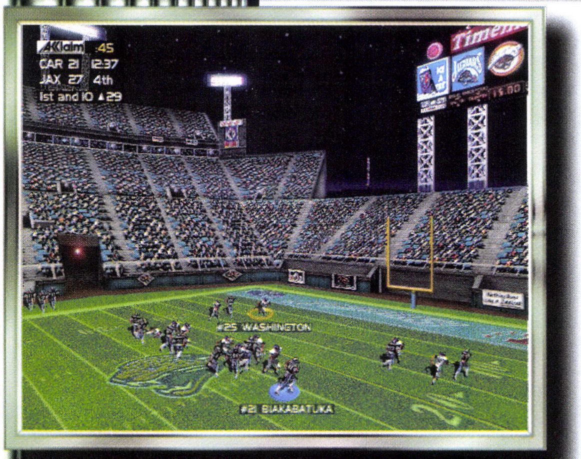




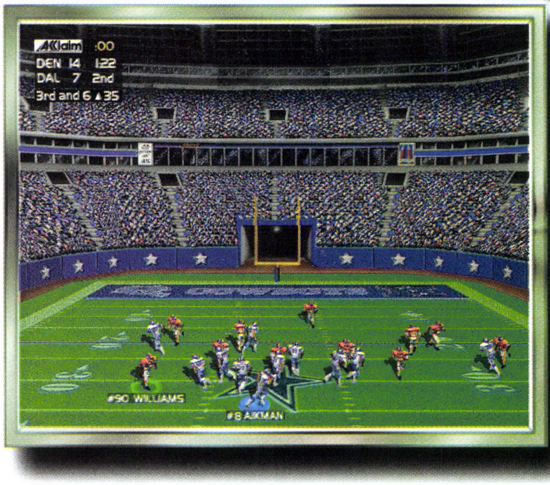


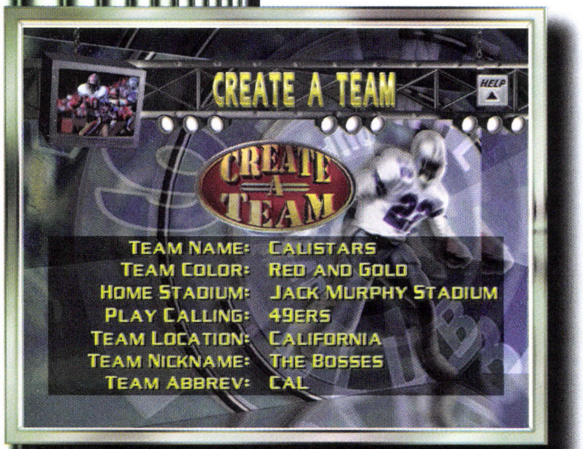
NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB '98

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE AUGUST


Acclaim :45
CAR 21 12:37
JAX 27 4th
1st and 10 ▲29
#25 WASHINGTON
#21 BIAKABATUKA

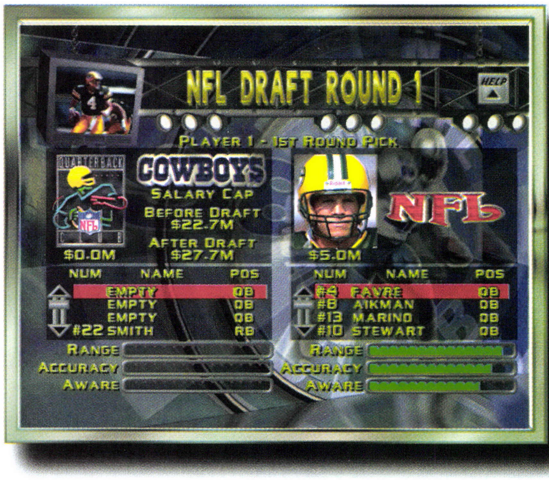
Here's one of three sports previews featuring an Acclaim title. The publisher has been hard at work solidifying their sports group since NBA Jam Extreme. NFL Quarterback Club '98 represents a new twist in the successful series that started, back a few years ago, with Steve Young as the poster boy. Last year featured Dan Marino on the cover, and now 1998 will see 2 time NFL MVP and Super Bowl champion, Brett Farve as the leading man. As far as the new game is concerned, all 30 NFL teams and over 1500 players are included, along with the ever popular trade and create a player option. You can also play GM by building a new team and dealing with the salary cap issue, player injuries, and signing and releasing players. For the offensive coordinator in you, there's the ability to script your plays, just like all the successful teams do. Of course, there's everybody's favorite, Marv Albert, doing the play by play, and the motion capture was done using Adrian Murrell of the New York Jets. Look for NFL Quarterback Club '98 in August.


Acclaim :00
DEN 14 1:22
DAL 7 2nd
3rd and 6 ▲35
#90 WILLIAMS
#8 AIKMAN


HELP
CREATE A TEAM

CREATE A TEAM

TEAM NAME: CALISTARS
TEAM COLOR: RED AND GOLD
HOME STADIUM: JACK MURPHY STADIUM
PLAY CALLING: 49ERS
TEAM LOCATION: CALIFORNIA
TEAM NICKNAME: THE BOSSES
TEAM ABBREV: CAL


HELP
QUARTERBACK
NFL
NFL

NFL DRAFT ROUND 1

PLAYER 1 - 1ST ROUND PICK

COWBOYS
SALARY CAP
BEFORE DRAFT
$22.7M
AFTER DRAFT
$27.7M

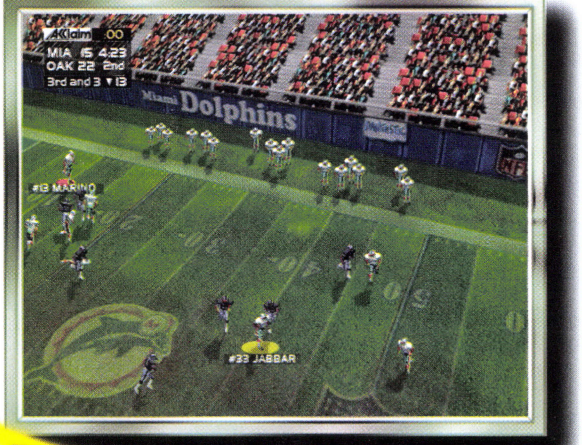
$0.0M

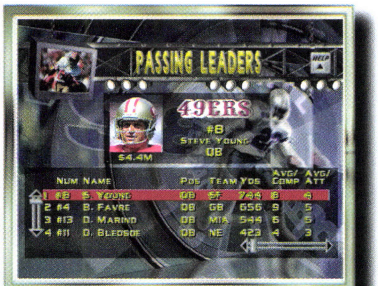
$5.0M

NUM	NAME	POS
	EMPTY	QB
	EMPTY	QB
	EMPTY	QB
#22	SMITH	RB

NUM	NAME	POS
#4	FAVRE	QB
#8	AIKMAN	QB
#13	MARINO	QB
#10	STEWART	QB

RANGE
ACCURACY
AWARE

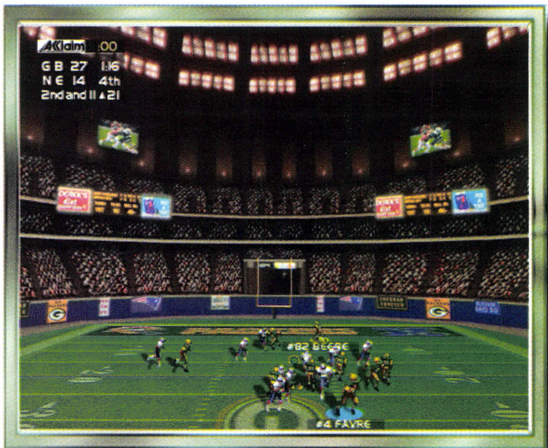

Acclaim :00
MIA 15 4:23
OAK 22 2nd
3rd and 3 ▼13
Dolphins
#13 MARINO
#33 JABBAR



PASSING LEADERS

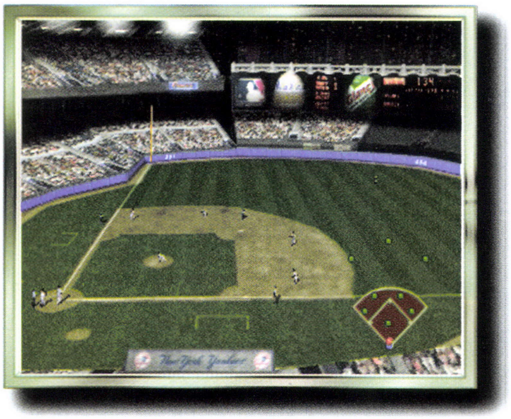
49ERS
#8
STEVE YOUNG
QB
$4.4M

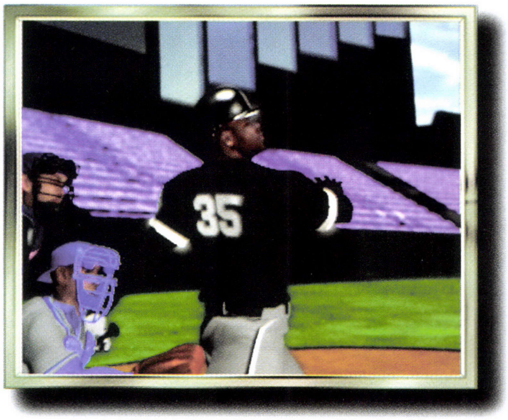
	NUM	NAME	POS	TEAM	YDS	AVG/ COMP	AVG/ ATT
1	#8	S. YOUNG	QB	SF	744	8	4
2	#4	B. FAVRE	QB	GB	656	9	5
3	#13	D. MARINO	QB	MIA	544	6	5
4	#11	D. BLEDSOE	QB	NE	423	4	3

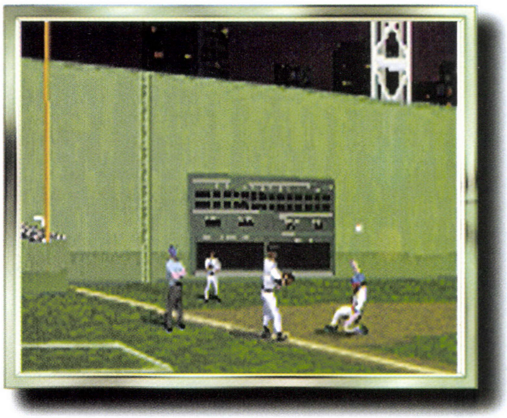

Acclaim :00
GB 27 1:16
NE 14 4th
2nd and 11 ▲21
#82 BEEBE
#4 FAVRE

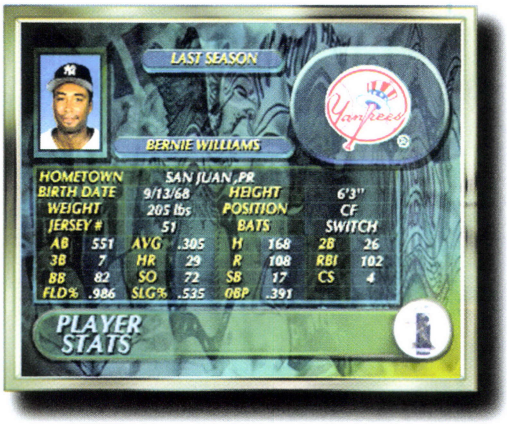
ALL STAR BASEBALL '97

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE JUNE









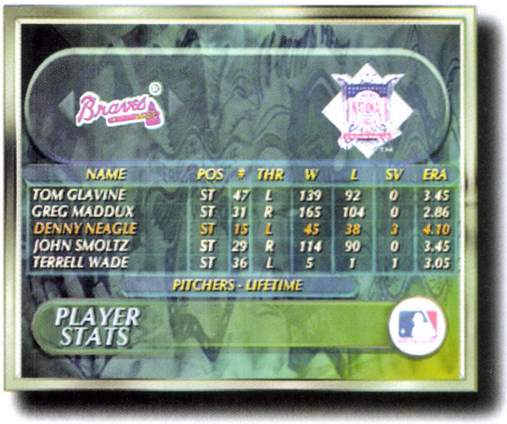
LAST SEASON

BERNIE WILLIAMS

HOMETOWN	SAN JUAN ,PR						
BIRTH DATE	9/13/68		HEIGHT		6'3"		
WEIGHT	205 lbs		POSITION		CF		
JERSEY #	51		BATS		SWITCH		
AB	551	AVG	.305	H	168	2B	26
3B	7	HR	29	R	108	RBI	102
BB	82	SO	72	SB	17	CS	4
FLD%	.986	SLG%	.535	OBP	.391		

PLAYER STATS

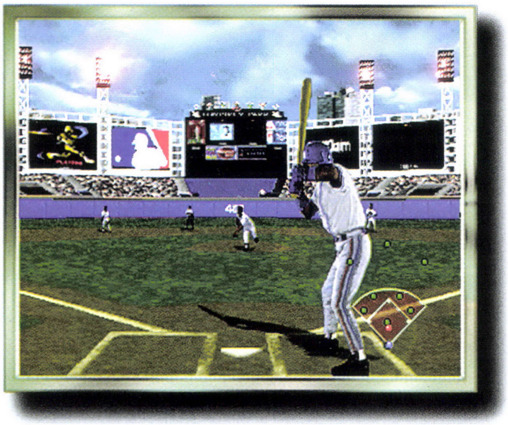
Acclaim continues to expand their sports lineup with the release of All Star Baseball '97 Featuring Frank Thomas (one long title, fer sure). A complete revamp of last year's Big Hurt Baseball, All Star Baseball '97 will be built from the ground up, with features like Major League Baseball Players Association license, along with the MLB license. The stadiums and 3D graphics are all highly detailed and Hi Res, with the inclusion of the new stadiums for the Diamondbacks and Devil Rays. New San Francisco Giants (and longtime ESPN) announcer Jon Miller provides the play-by-play, and Frank Thomas again adds to the game by being the motion capture guinea pig. The game will also feature complete stats tracking for the entire league, as well as the ability to trade and create players. The controls will be all new, with completely re-tooled batting, pitching and fielding interfaces. Acclaim has seen the challengers (Interplay, EA, Konami, Accolade) and appears to be headed in the right direction. As always, keep your eyes glued to PSExtreme for the quality coverage you've come to expect.

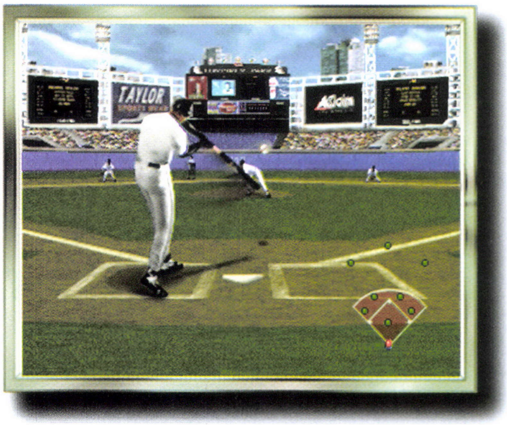


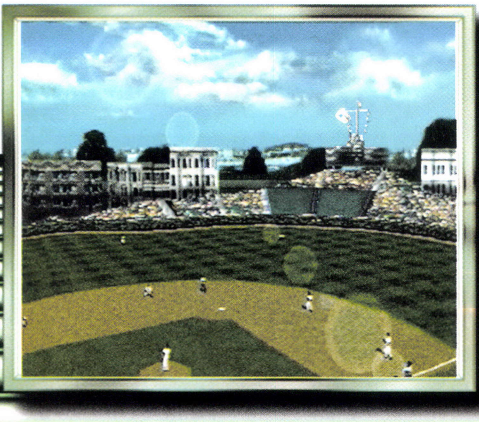
NAME	POS	#	THR	W	L	SV	ERA
TOM GLAVINE	ST	47	L	139	92	0	3.45
GREG MADDUX	ST	31	R	165	104	0	2.86
DENNY NEAGLE	ST	15	L	45	38	3	4.10
JOHN SMOLTZ	ST	29	R	114	90	0	3.45
TERRELL WADE	ST	36	L	5	1	1	3.05

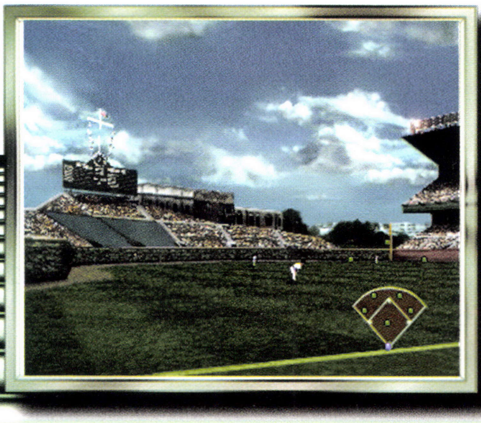
PITCHERS - LIFETIME

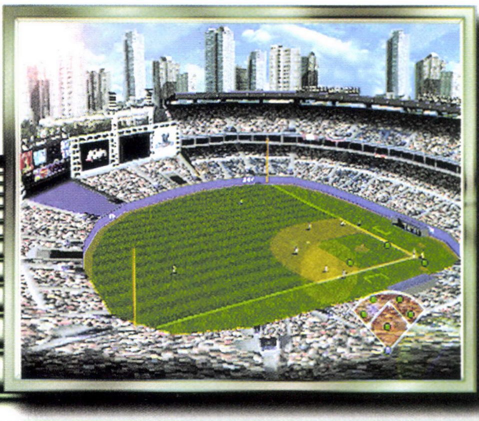
PLAYER STATS





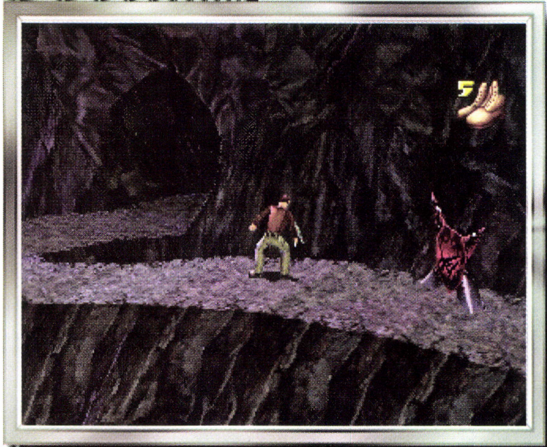


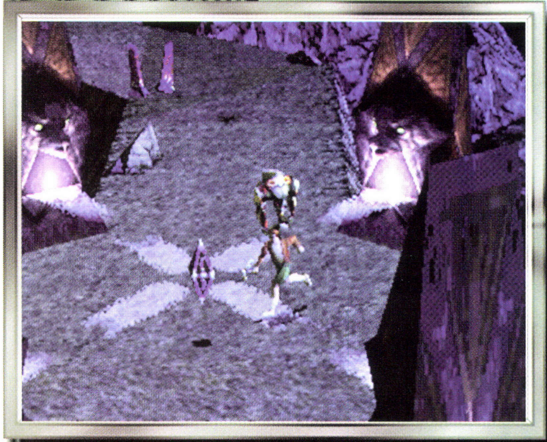


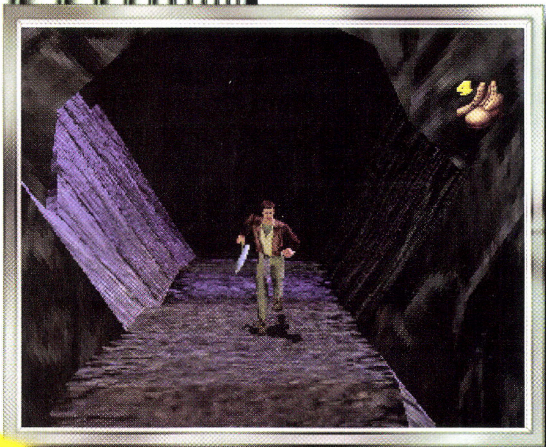


PITFALL 3D

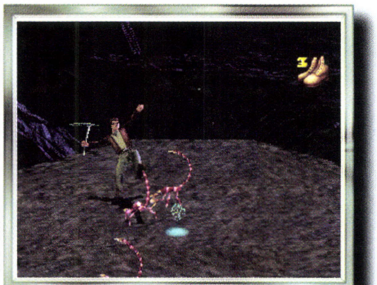
ACTIVISION • AVAILABLE FALL

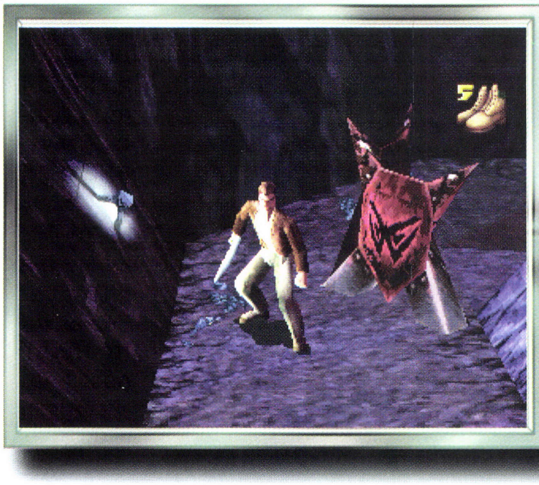


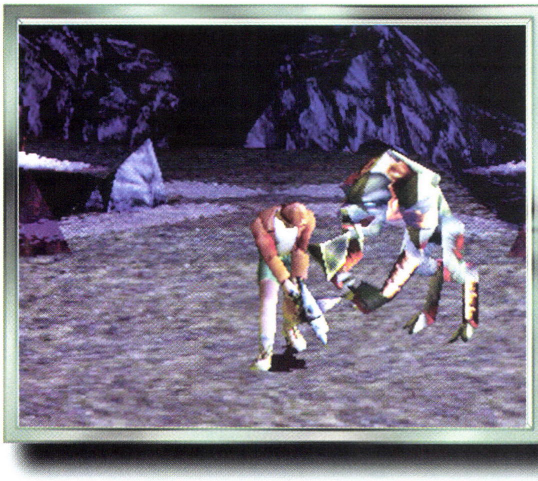


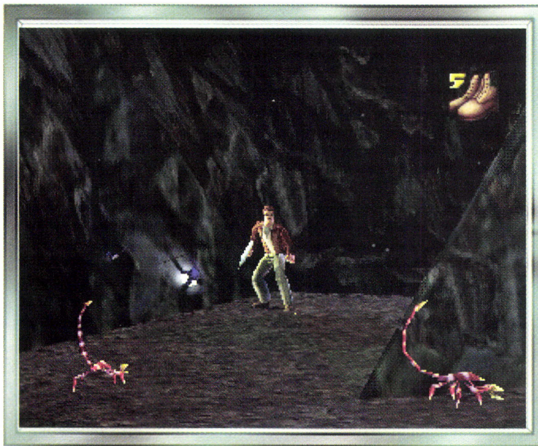


Activision's Pitfall 3D is edging ever-closer to completion and the good folks at the Los Angeles, California-based publishing house have cranked out a few new screen shots for your viewing pleasure. For those of you that have been living under the proverbial video game rock over the past 20 years, Pitfall was the initial defining moment in side-scroll action games. The goal was simple: put the 2k cartridge in the ol' Atari 2600 and guide Pitfall Harry over a series of obstacles, including rolling logs, alligators, quicksand and the like. Much like the Lord of the Apes, Harry had to grab the vine and swing into action over much of the game. The '90's finds our hero in his new adventure that, while remaining true to the original, is a graphical wonderland — in 3D, real-time environments. And the environment is not all that has changed — his bag of tricks now includes a set of different weapons that become available as you progress through the game. We hope to have a playable version of Pitfall 3D soon — look for more in these hallowed EX*PECTING* pages.



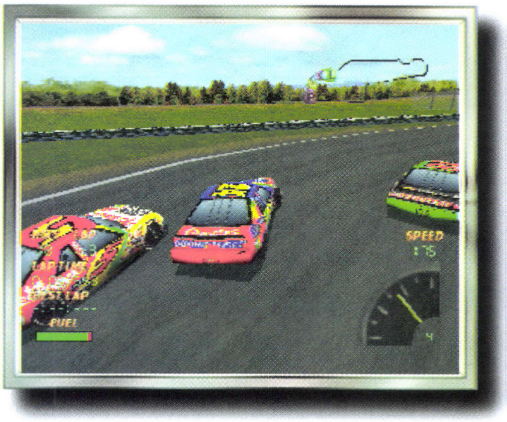


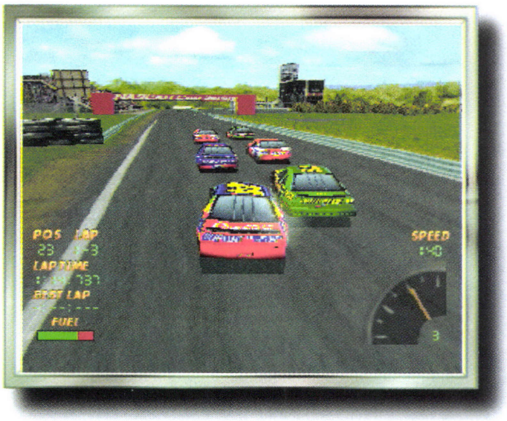


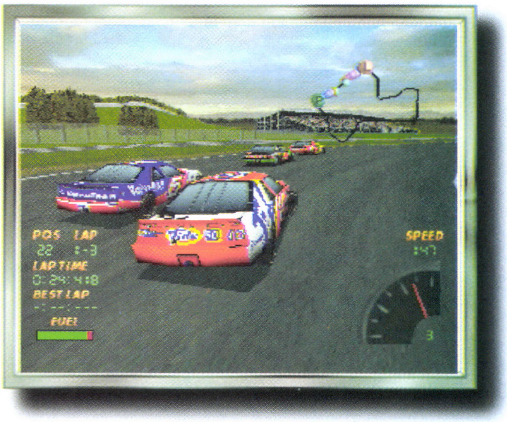


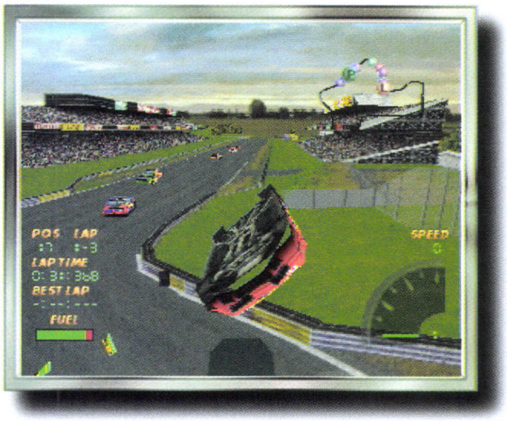
NASCAR 98

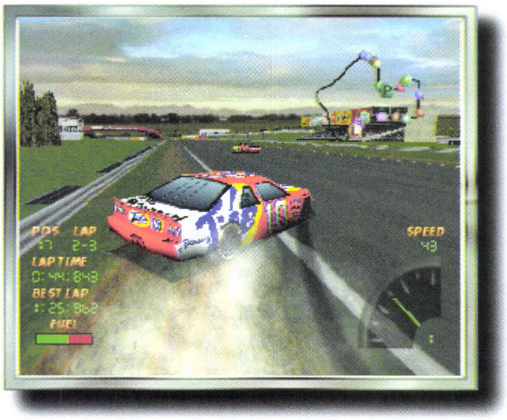
EA • AVAILABLE FALL


SPEED
175
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL

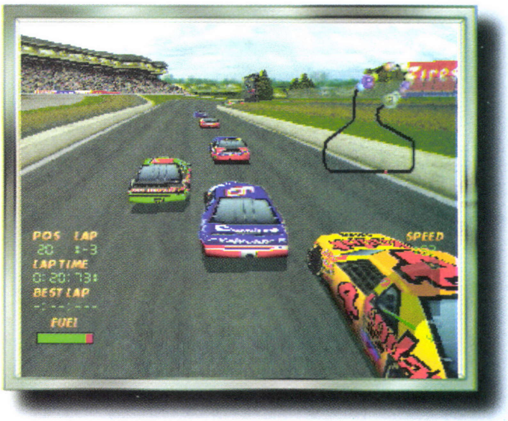

POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED
140

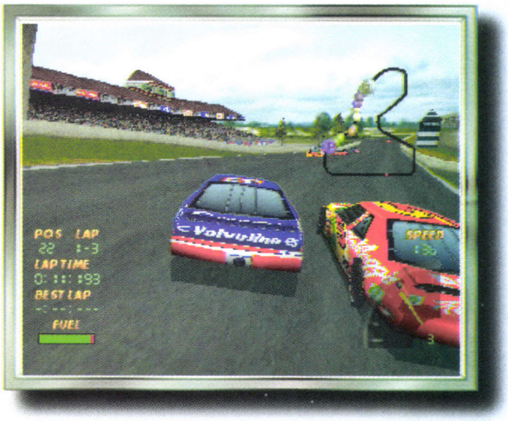

POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED
147

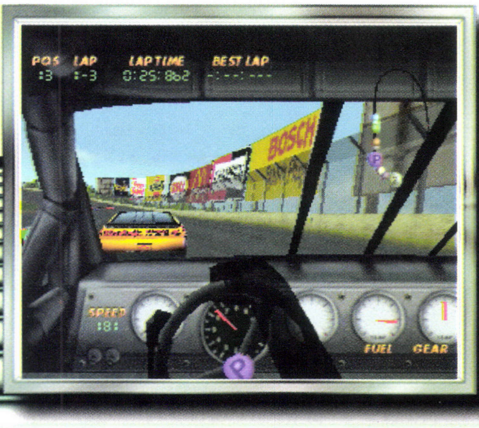

POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED

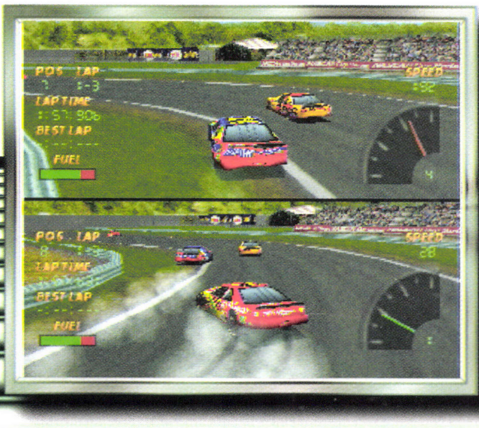

POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED

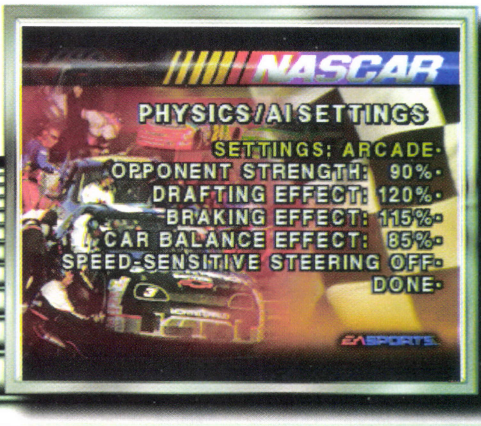
Electronic Arts is following up the success of their previous best-selling driving titles, Andretti Racing and Need for Speed 2, with an all-new NASCAR 98. As the title implies it has a complete NASCAR license along with 17 different race tracks (11 authentic tracks and six fantasy courses). Of the 17 different tracks, eight of them will be ovals and nine will be road courses. There will also be 24 licensed vehicles from some of your favorite drivers and teams, each meticulously replicated to its original specifications. Among the myriad of options from which to choose, will be the ability to race a complete race, be it 250 laps or 150, or just a percentage of the race (break it down to 10%, 15%, etc). The cars will also sustain full damage, limited damage or none at all depending on the game mode (simulation, custom or action, respectively). While the game is more than a few months away from being shipped, we can truthfully say it looks fantastic already. As always, we'll be right there as the updates come in, and keep you up to date as well.


POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED


POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED

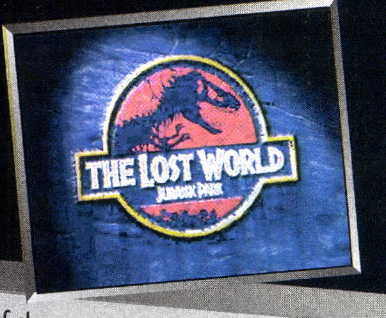

POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
BOSCH
SPEED
FUEL
GEAR


POS LAP
LAP TIME
BEST LAP
FUEL
SPEED


NASCAR
EA SPORTS

PHYSICS/AI SETTINGS
SETTINGS: ARCADE
OPPONENT STRENGTH: 90%
DRAFTING EFFECT: 120%
BRAKING EFFECT: 115%
CAR BALANCE EFFECT: 85%
SPEED-SENSITIVE STEERING OFF
DONE

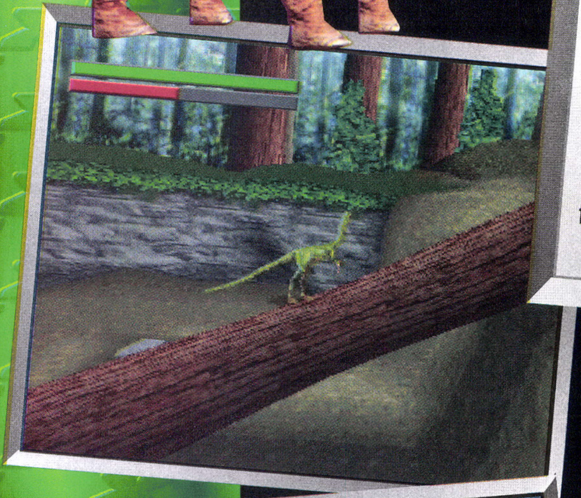
THE LOST WORLD
JURASSIC PARK™

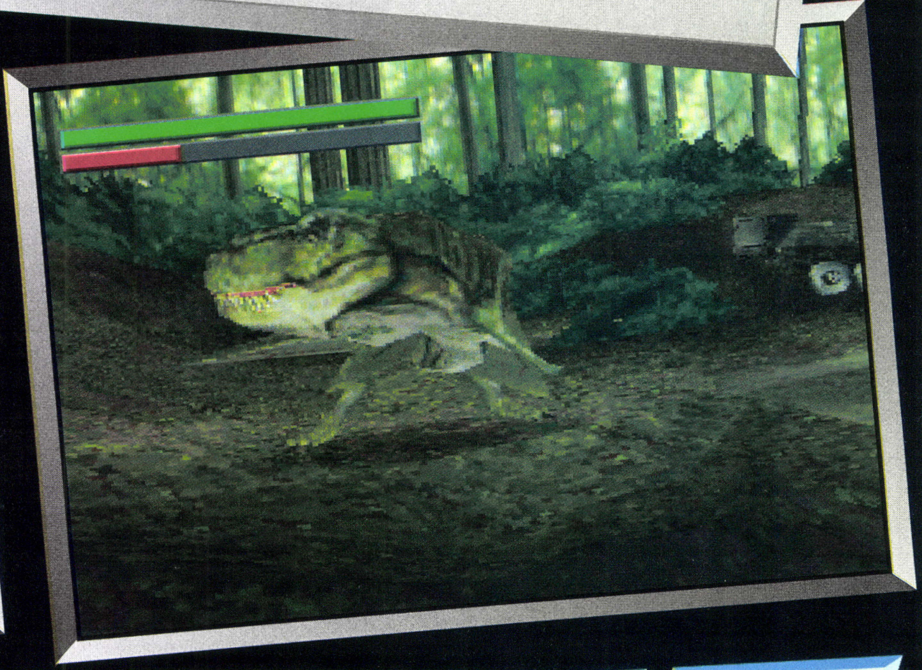


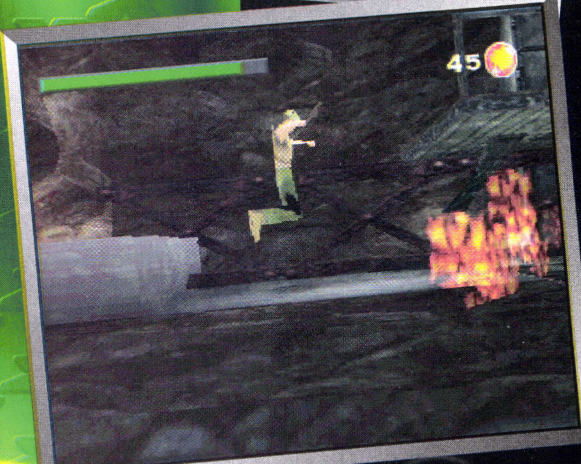
TYRANNOSAURUS REX

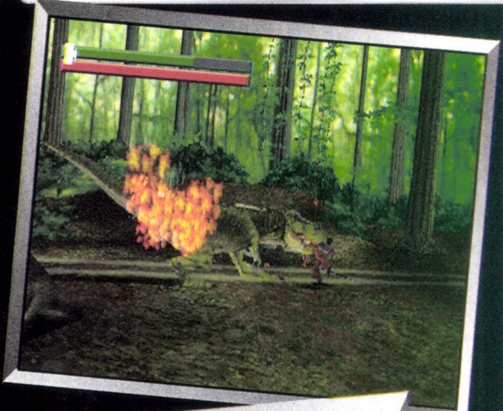
If there is one new video game developer that you would expect great things from, it would be DreamWorks Interactive. I mean, come on, what young, red-blooded American doesn't salivate in anticipation of a new Spielberg action-thriller (i.e. Indiana Jones, Jurassic Park, Back to the Future)? I know that I fall somewhere in that category. In fact, I probably spent the better part of my youth in California's San Fernando Valley, waiting in one line or another for the latest Spielberg masterpiece to hit the big screen.

And it wasn't just about movies. There are probably very few of you that remember this, but Spielberg has a long history in the video game industry. Beginning with a little company called "Imagic". In the early '80's this company was one of the top game publishers on the Atari 2600 and, more impressively, Mattel's Intellivision. Dave, Eric and I still own their titles, (Tim was kind enough to give me his collection to add to mine) including Dracula, Demon Attack and Atlantis. Mr. Spielberg has also been very visible at industry trade shows over the past 10 years, so it is no surprise that his company is charging forward in this era of advanced







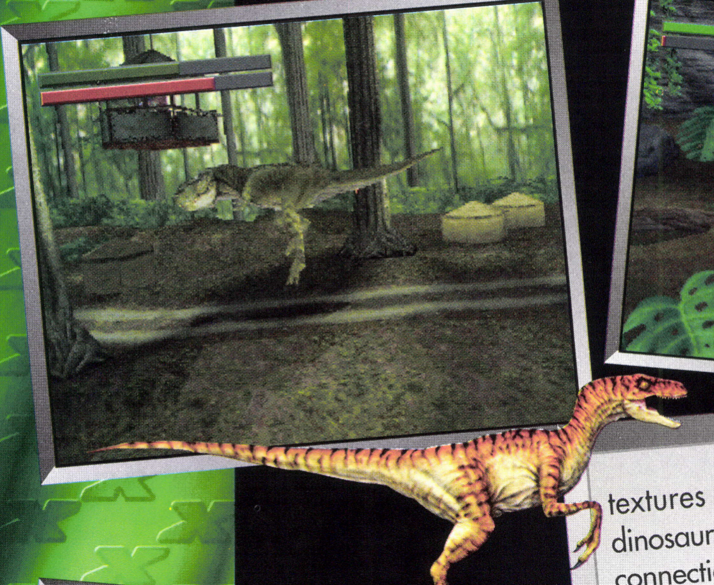


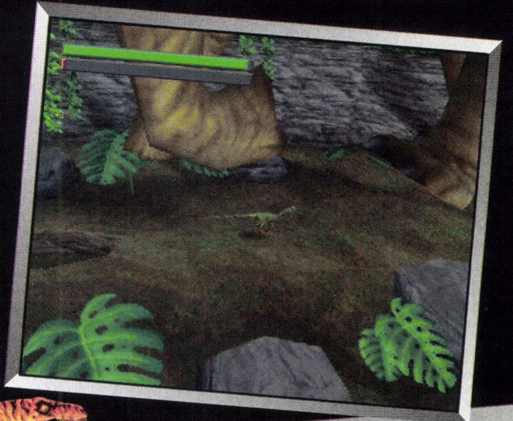
gaming technology.

The Lost World: Jurassic Park is the company's second entertainment project (the first being The Neverhood on PC) and it is their maiden PlayStation effort. Obviously, a big part of what has heightened the anticipation surrounding Lost World is the production values that we have all come to expect from anything sporting the Spielberg name. As you can see from the screen shots and art work that are spread across these four pages, Lost World is not lacking for graphic detail.

While the game is still in the development stages, it's clear that the talented developers at DreamWorks Interactive have laid quite a foundation. Expect Lost World, like its movie counterpart, to be packed with eye-popping special effects, so realistic that you'll swear they came straight from special effects house, Industrial Light and Magic. The game designers have gone so far as to develop and make use of their own proprietary morphing technology, named Morf-X, which allows them to not only create incredibly detailed dinosaurs, but realistically animate them to an extent that has never been seen before. When applied, the transitions from one movement to the next are so seamless, that you'll swear your controlling something that's alive — it's that fluid!

As expected, all of the dinosaur and other characters are comprised of polygons. What's unusual about this, is the way the texture maps have been applied, like skin, over the polygons with the use of mesh modifiers. The



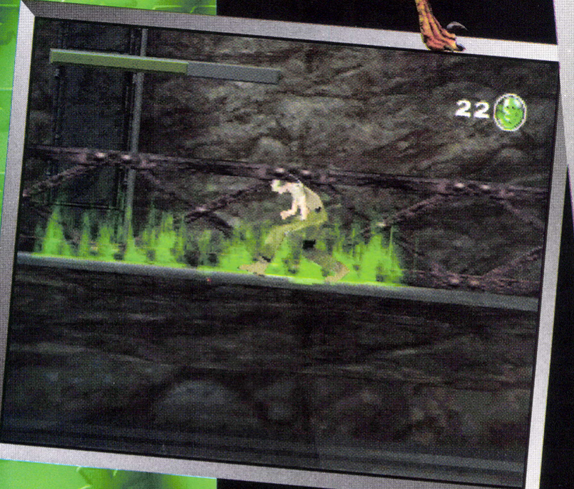


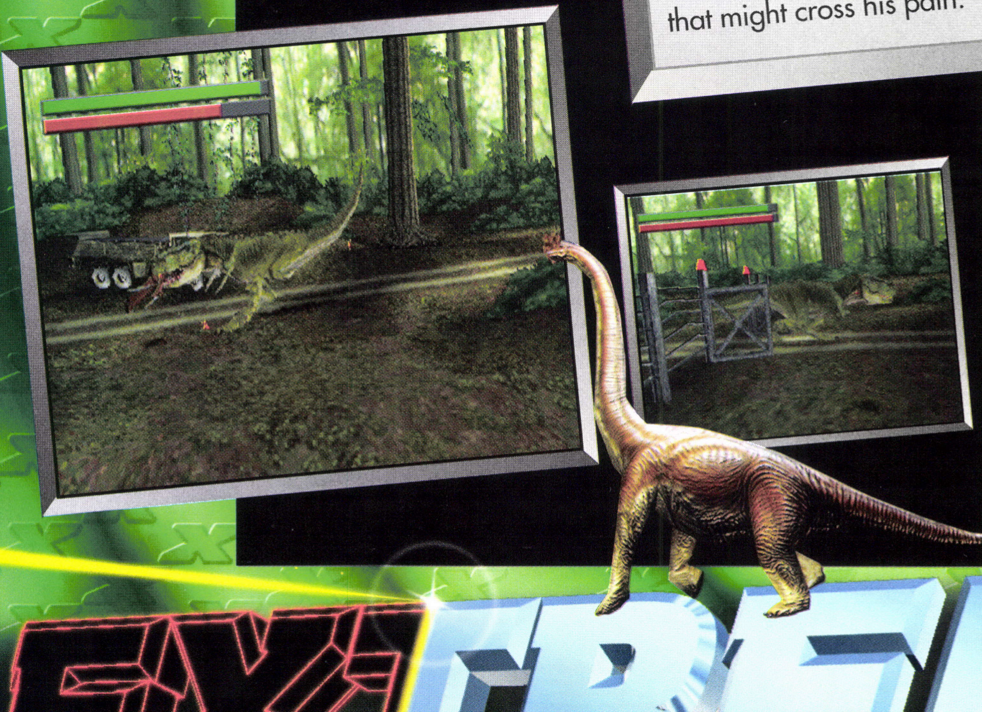
AREA
00001
INGEN SITE "B"
ISLA SORNA
ISLAND COMPUTER NETWORK
DNA ANALYSIS
00424

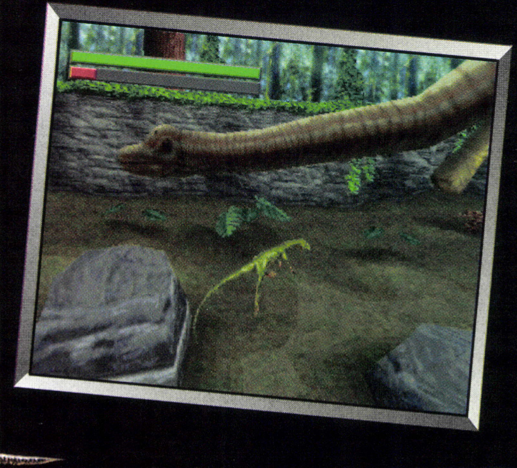
textures are ultra-detailed and the 'skin' is stretched over the dinosaur's joints in such a way that there are none of those obvious connection points or joints between body parts, that are common in most games featuring polygon-based animation.

In addition, the backgrounds offer a level of detail that is on par with the reigning king of graphic splendor, Sony's Crash Bandicoot.

The gameplay involves players taking on the roles of five different characters, as you progress through the game. You start off as a teeny Compsognathus (compy), in which the focus is to keep out of trouble's way while learning how to forage for food. From there, the player will graduate from the blood-thirsty Velociraptor to the mighty T-Rex. Oh yeah, you also partake in a little human action along the way, where you'll take on the nasty dinos with weaponry such as tazers, grenades and nerve gas. Each character has different objectives and different gameplay requirements. The compy's goal might just be to stay alive, whereas the T-Rex will be all about causing mass destruction, while chomping down on any humans that might cross his path.







Because Lost World is currently still in production, it is difficult to comment on the gameplay. What can be said, is that it's presented in a limited, three-dimensional environment that scrolls along preset paths, (slightly similar to that of Crystal Dynamic's Pandemonium! or BMG's Spider) except, there will be plenty of branched sections that will lead the player to new or hidden areas.

In addition, Lost World features a Redbook Audio soundtrack that remains true to the John Williams-esque orchestration found in most of Spielberg's films, and most of the game's sound effects were taken straight from the two movies, including the T-Rex's mighty roar.

Will The Lost World be the next big thing in the PlayStation world? Time will certainly tell. But, if the movie hits (most Hollywood insiders believe that this is a foregone conclusion), and the game plays as good as it looks, DreamWorks Interactive could have a blockbuster on its hands, and one of the few successful movie-to-video game translations.

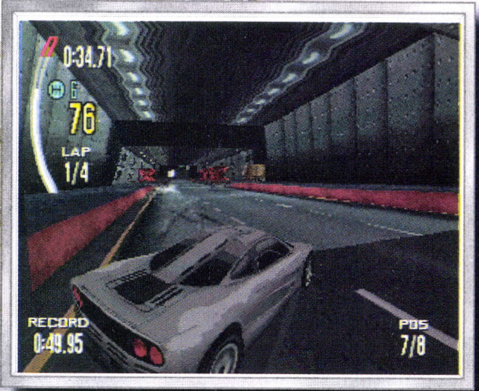
One interesting historical fact to note: If The Lost World reaches retailer shelves on Memorial Day weekend, it will be the first game, licensed from a film property, to ship at the same time as the movie on which it is based.

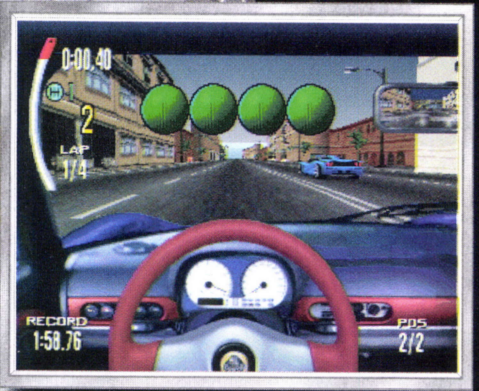
The Lost World: Jurassic Park is currently scheduled for a simultaneous release with the movie, over the Memorial Day weekend. We should have a reviewable version of the game in our next issue.

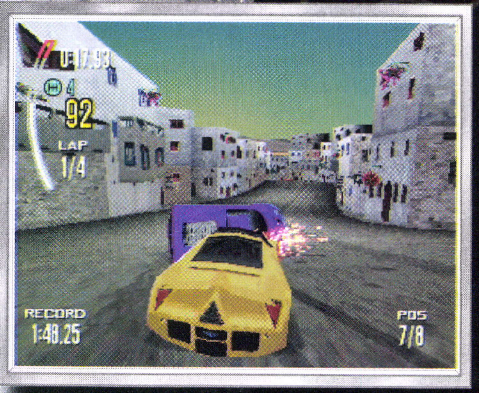
Greg

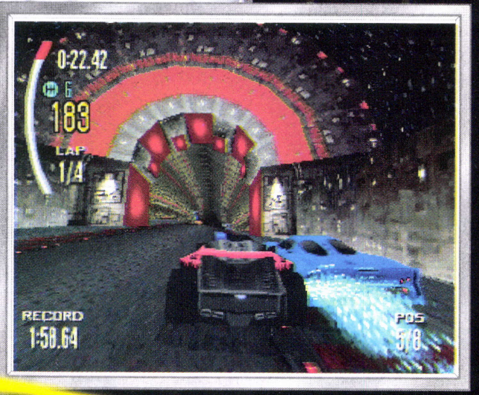
NEED FOR SPEED II

PUBLISHED BY EA — DEVELOPED BY EA CANADA



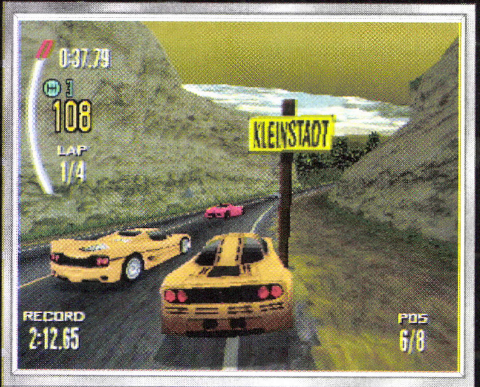


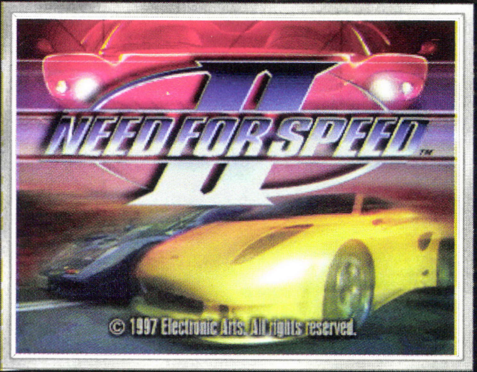




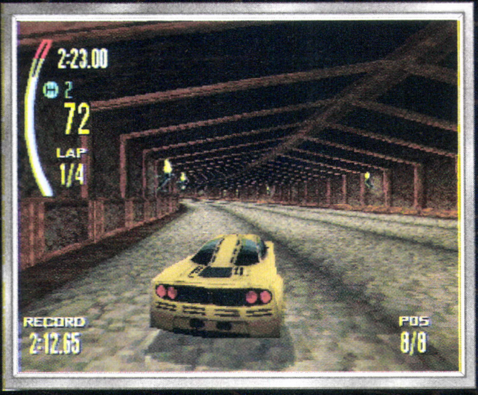
So, you thought driving that Lamborghini Diablo Vt and Ferrari 512TR was pretty fun, eh? Well, as the group with "overdrive" in their name used to sing — you ain't seen nothing yet! Electronic Arts is back behind the wheel with the sequel to one of our favorite racing titles, Need for Speed 2. We've been waiting for some time to get ahold of this title and, now that we have it, we won't be loaning it out anytime soon! Just as Namco's Rage Racer captivated the office for weeks, last month, so has Need for Speed 2. At one time or another, everyone in the office spent serious amounts of time enjoying this speed freak. However, the story you are about to read is just one man's interpretation of the ensuing events (sorry, I just watched an episode of the Twilight Zone).

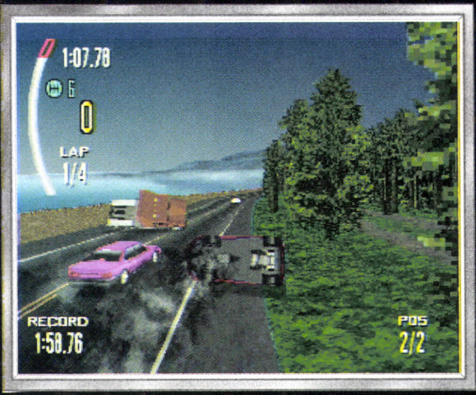
Need for Speed 2 is pretty similar to last years' title, with the major change being in the head to head mode. If you recall, in the original Need for Speed, you and your opponent (computer or split screen human) raced a course to check points which would break the course down into four or five sections. There were cops that would chase after you and, if you got pulled over twice during the same section, you would be disqualified from the race. Well, this portion has been thankfully removed from NFS2, and what we're left with is just flat out racing through the entire course.

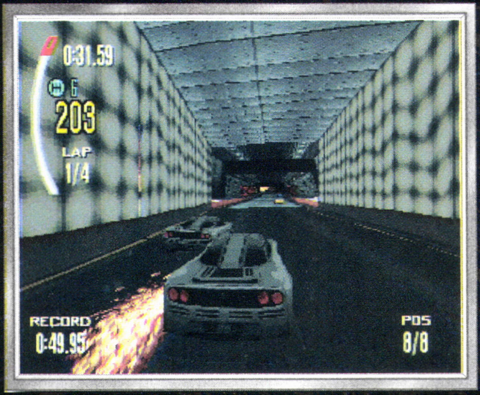


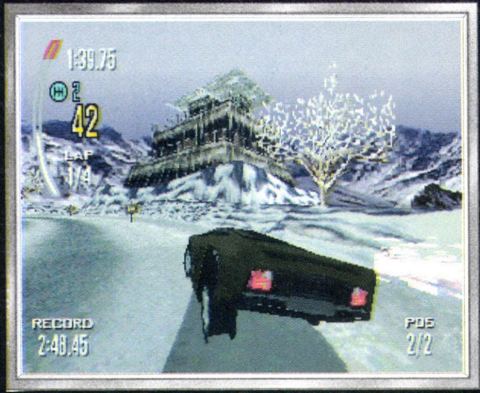


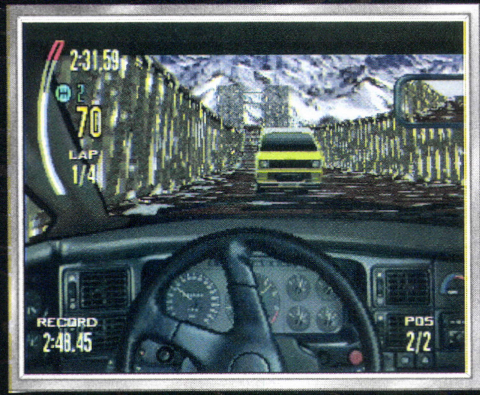
To go along with the new play mechanics, you will be doing laps (you can choose the number) around the course rather than just the single straight line approach. To me, this is a fantastic change of pace, without being too radical a departure from the original overall game concept. NFS2 offers Tournament play, single race (you determine if you want to race against nobody, one guy, or a "full grid" — seven cars plus you), and knockout mode, where you race each course with the last place finisher being dropped from the next race. You can elect to race with traffic being "on or off", thus allowing even more flexibility and delivering more or less of a challenge, as your skill level increases. Speaking of skill level, you can select from beginner or advanced, although beginner is a bit too easy. There are six different courses (and a secret bonus course) to choose from, all with varying degrees of difficulty. The "proving grounds" is a simple oval that you won't use after you've set the course record — there isn't much to see here. The Outback course is set in Australia and is a great place to open 'er up, as there are few spots where you'll need to let off the gas or even hit the breaks. The other courses get progressively more difficult, as it takes quite a bit of strategy in learning the courses and knowing when to ease up, when to hit the breaks, and how hard to hit 'em. The course that is my personal favorite is





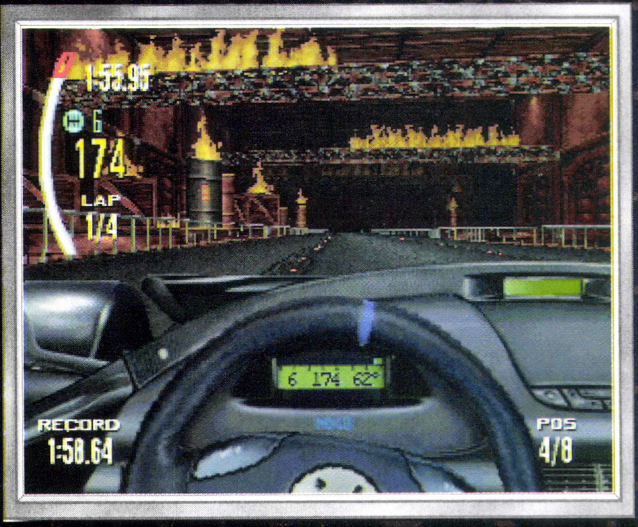






the "Mediterraneo" track, it features a couple of nasty turns that require you to shift from 6th gear to 2nd, then blast back up to 5th, down to 3rd, and then let it all fly back up over 220 mph. Cool! The sensation of acceleration and deceleration is pinpoint accurate. Not that any of us here have raced cars for a living, but we have raced highways 580 and 680 in our 944 Turbo (aka, The Money Pit) and RX-7 Turbo (aka, The Machine) to the delight and fright of many.

I guess this is as good a time as any to mention the vehicles in Need for Speed 2. What I really enjoyed about the original game was being able to drive cars that I had seen in showrooms, and some I had taken for a test drive, but couldn't take home and put in the garage. The Supra, RX—7, NSX, 911, Corvette, and Viper were all just like I had seen or driven. So I was a little apprehensive with NFS2 because these "supercars" were so far out of reach, that I have never even SEEN one anywhere except Car&Driver. Well, I've gotten over that now, and enjoy a blistering life of McLaren F1 and Lotus GT1 driving. These two cars are the best (or if I were ten years younger, the "bomb"). There's also the Ferrari F50, Jaguar XJ220, Lotus Esprit V8, Ford GT90, Italdesign Cala, and Isdera 112i. The Ford is probably the 3rd best, but its acceleration is way too slow. The F50 has got the acceleration covered, but it handles surprisingly poorly (but then again, how would I know?). Graphically, NFS2 can't compare to Rage Racer, as the colors are muted and have a washed out look to them. And the colors for the cars? Good grief, Charlie Brown, what's up with these choices? I want black, silver, RED, or white. However, I got over the color issue too. The game is just too darn fast and playable to let a little color blemish get you down. And the sound fx and music? Top notch. There's nothing like the sound of the engines in NFS2, particularly when you and an opponent are side by side, with both engines singing their own tune. Sweet music, indeed. Speaking of which, the music really takes a back seat in NFS2, but there are some quality tunes in here.



In 26 words or less: Run out and grab yourself a copy of Need for Speed 2. You won't be disappointed, no matter what your expectations are. A must have driver.

Eric

PS EXTREME

THE BOTTOM LINE

92%

COMPATIBILITY

1or 2 Players

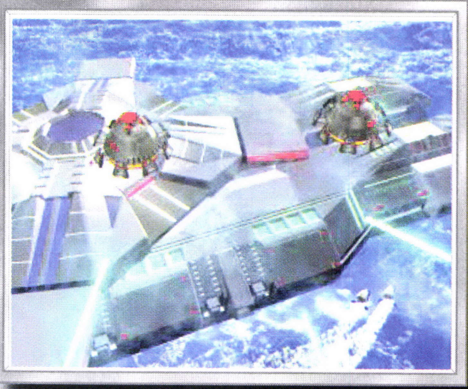
Analog Joystick Compatible

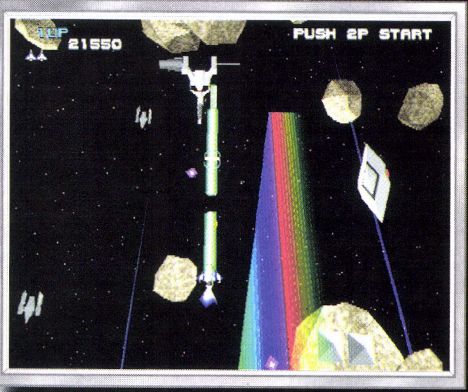
... So, you thought driving that Lamborghini Diablo Vt and Ferrari 512TR was pretty fun, eh? Well, as the group with "overdrive" in their name used to sing — you ain't seen nothing yet! We've been waiting for some time to get a hold of this title, and now that we have it, we won't be loaning it out anytime soon! Just as Namco's Rage Racer captivated the office for weeks last month, so has Need for Speed 2. So, in 26 words or less: Run out and grab yourself a copy of Need for Speed 2. You won't be disappointed, no matter what your expectations are. A must have driver.

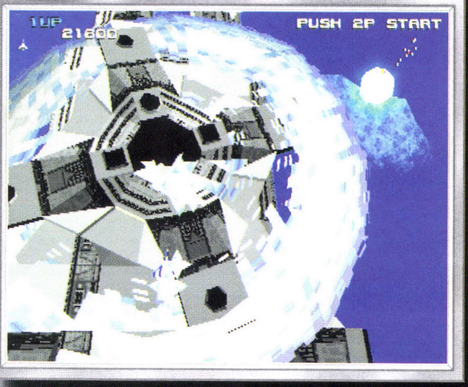
GOLD X

XEVIOUS 3D/G+

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY NAMCO







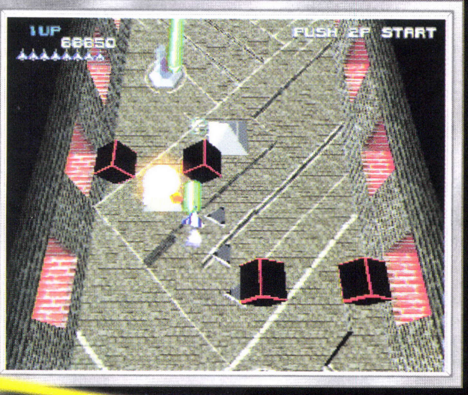
Xevious 3D/G+
TM
PUSH START BUTTON
namco
TM & ©1997 NAMCO LTD., ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

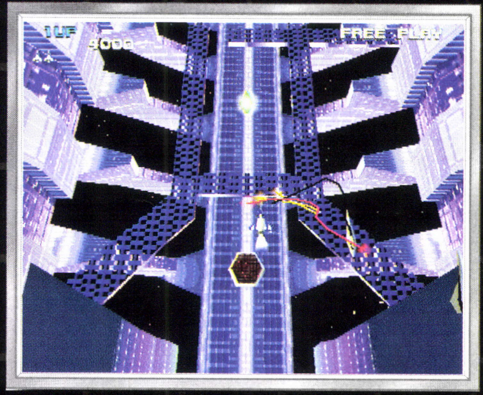
Namco is a very interesting game publisher. On the PlayStation, they have made their mark by being what I'll call the "Hi-tech/low-tech software company". They've sold a ton of their high-end arcade translations (Ridge Racer, Tekken, Tekken 2, Rage Racer, etc.), and many copies of their golden moldies, the by-design, low-tech Namco Museum series. While seemingly at odds with each other, from a product development and marketing standpoint, the company has managed to successfully straddle two generations — separated by as much as twenty years.

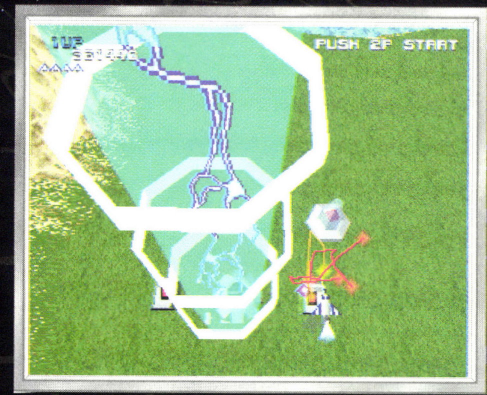
Into this mix, Namco is releasing what can best be described as a hybrid of these two distinct approaches, "Xevious 3D/G". Based on the now-classic coin-op, this CD is kind of a greatest hits collection for Xevious fans — featuring four different versions of the game: the original coin-op, its rarely seen arcade sequel (Super Xevious), an "arranged" version (better sound effects/music and graphics than the original) and the main feature of the package, a new 3D version of the game. Since most of you are at least vaguely familiar with the arcade versions of the game, we will concentrate on the 3D game — since it's probably the reason why most of you would be interested in purchasing the product.

Xevious 3D/G, as its name would imply (and owning a PlayStation would lead you to expect) takes the original gameplay concepts of the arcade machine and brings it into a polygonal 3D world. While the graphics are nice and high-res, there isn't a whole lot of detail in the game's six areas (+ the final showdown), or the enemies and bosses. And, in typical shooter fashion, there is the occasional slowdown that occurs when there are too many objects on screen at the same time. (Isn't it amazing that, no matter how sophisticated our gaming hardware gets, shooters always seem to humble the beasts?)

While, for those of us who remember playing Xevious in our local arcades when it was released in the early '80's, it is exciting to see Xevious brought into the real-time world of the '90's; the lack of depth in the game is what will end up leaving you with a "more frosting than cake" kind of feeling. Like most shooters brought home from the arcade,

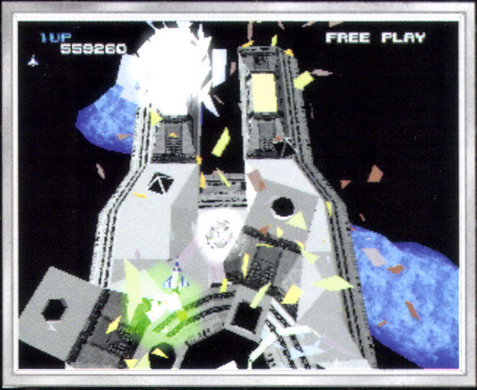


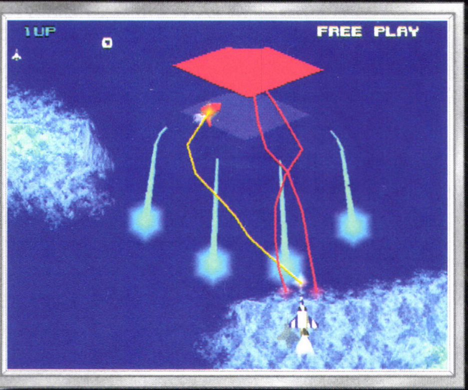


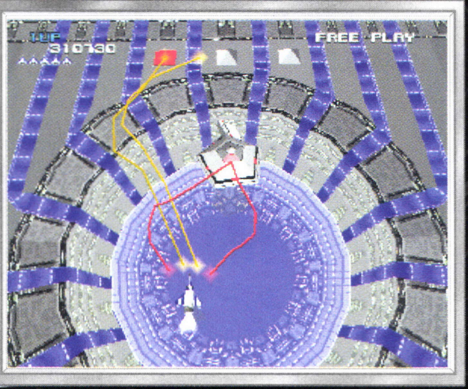


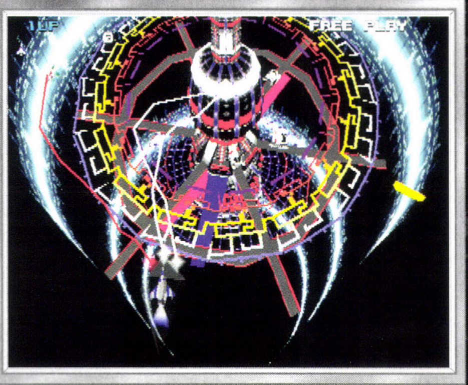
1UP
21650
PUSH 2P START

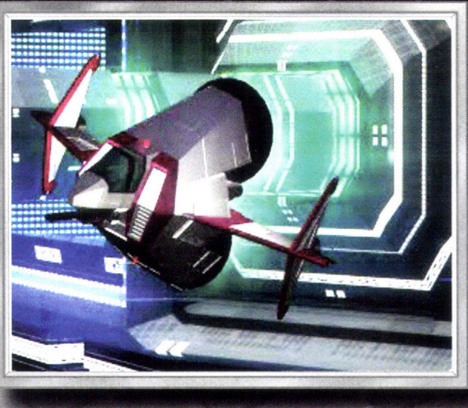
1UP
359370
PUSH 2P START











the game is just too short. What works well when you have to put more quarters into the slot, does not work as well when you've pre-paid with your 40-50 samollians, then keep hitting that "Start" button. The six areas of the game go by pretty quickly (about a half hour) and its on to something different. It pretty much boils down to this; shoot, dodge, survive, power-up your weapon (there are three different weapons available in the game (+ the ever-present bomb) — the basic spread pea shooter, a laser, and a tracking beam thingie), get killed, lose power-up and go back to basic weapon, repeat process until you run out of lives, hit "Continue", then make it to the level boss, get wiped and finish him off with your most basic weapon — pouring through lives in the process. Obviously, for all but those who worship before the altar of Xevious, this is going to result in a less than fulfilling experience. Of course, again in classic shooter fashion, there is so much happening on the screen at one time that, in order to make it though the game using the minimum number of lives (ultimately, this is the only way to challenge your game playing skills), you will not be looking at the backgrounds, enemies or bosses — you will be looking at their weapon trails (the best way of trying to avoid the onslaught).

1UP
80550
FREE PLAY

The bottom line with Xevious 3D/G is that it will appeal, as a purchase option, to Xevious fans, and will be a rental for everyone else. Namco has put a solid package together, in terms of giving the Xevious fan everything that he or she could want, but the average PlayStation owner is going to see this as a quickie experience, with the life expectancy of the average house fly.

Dave

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

80%

COMPATIBILITY

1or 2 Players

The bottom line with Xevious 3D/G is that it will appeal, as a purchase option, to Xevious fans, and will be a rental for everyone else. Namco has put a solid package together, in terms of giving the Xevious fan everything that he or she could want, but the average PlayStation owner is going to see this as a quickie experience, with the life expectancy of the average house fly.

SILVER X

watchman
HAYANO
9186
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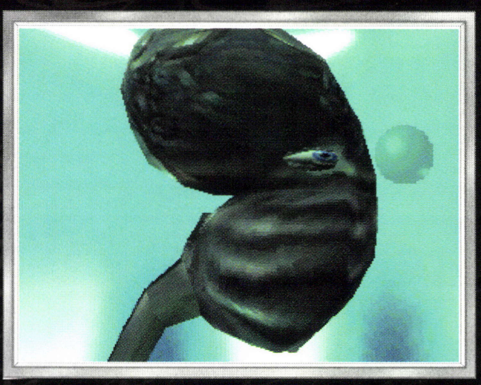
4 5 6
7 8 9
# 0

OVERBLOOD

PUBLISHED BY EA — DEVELOPED BY RIVERHILL SOFT



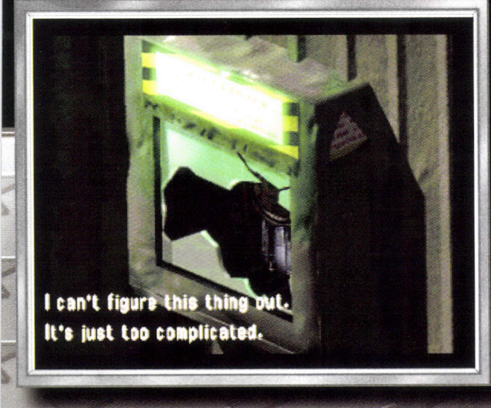
If you've been reading PSExtreme for any given amount of time, then you might have seen Electronic Arts' OverBlood previewed in our EXPORT section way back in the November '96 issue. Originally conceived and programmed by Japanese developers, Riverhill Soft, (best known for an obscure, import, 3DO title by the name of Dr. Hauser) OverBlood has since been picked up by EA and translated and localized for the American market for a May release.

If there were any comparisons to be made, (and there always are) OverBlood could easily be seen as a hybrid somewhere between Alone in the Dark, Resident Evil and, to a lesser extent, Fade to Black. While certainly not bad company to keep, OverBlood actually tries to go one step further, which, ultimately, leads to its single biggest flaw (more on that later).

The story is a sci-fi lover's dream come true. You take on the persona of Ray Karcy, a man who awakes from cryogenic sleep in an underground base, somewhere in the future. As the game unfolds, he comes to realize that not only does he have a serious case of amnesia, he's also been infected with a deadly virus that is slowly killing him from the inside out — talk about a real bummer. Thus, the gist of the game is to stumble your way through its various puzzles, traps and pitfalls, regain your memory and, ultimately, find a cure for your disease.

Besides the main character, Ray, you will encounter two other controllable characters: Pipo, a small and gregarious robot, and a young woman by the name of Millie. In addition to standard moves, such as walk, run, jump, examine, etc., each have their own specialized attributes which can, and need to, be applied to any given puzzle or situation. These, for the most part, are of the "figuring out what item to use with what or where" sort. While most are easy, I must admit I was stumped a few times.

As stated just a few paragraphs ago, OverBlood has a certain Resident Evil-ish look and feel to it. What separates this title from RE and the others men-



tioned above, is its unique 3D polygonal engine which renders everything — backgrounds, foregrounds, objects, characters, etc. — in 3D, whereas other comparable titles use 3D characters with a series of dramatic camera angles in pre-rendered, two-dimensional backgrounds. The result, in this case, is a slightly less-detailed environment and a lot of quirky and frustrating control issues. This leads to my biggest complaint: While the game's look is impressive, the control is anything but, and I found myself getting annoyed and impatient with it pretty early on in the game — almost to the point where I didn't care to play anymore. For example, the run button is also the push button, and sometimes when you want to run and not shove whatever object is in your general area, your character will oafishly put his hands out in his pushing gesture and get stuck on invisible objects — this happens over and over. It seems like the developers sought to rectify the problem by giving the player the ability to switch from different camera angles (overhead, first person, and third person) in order to gauge where he is on-screen in relation to everything else, but it doesn't quite work. Also, the game requires certain platform elements (i.e. jumping) and, due to the lack of finesse and poor response times, this also becomes somewhat of an exercise in frustration.

If you can get over the poor control, there's some pretty cool game here. The graphics are nicely detailed and well-done and, as in Resident Evil, there is that certain uneasy foreboding feeling you get when playing the game. This feeling is heightened with a suspenseful soundtrack and atmospheric sound effects. You also have the ability to save at any time, (once you find a certain object early-on in the game) which comes in handy, as there is a lot of dying going on.

Although I can't wholeheartedly recommend OverBlood, and consequently give it the "Gold X" rating due to its bad control, it's still a good game. If you have the patience and tolerance to persevere and overlook this one fault, then you will probably be happy with your purchase. Plus, who knows when Resident Evil 2 will actually be released in America, so you're going to need something to play and OverBlood just might be it.

Greg

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

82%

COMPATIBILITY

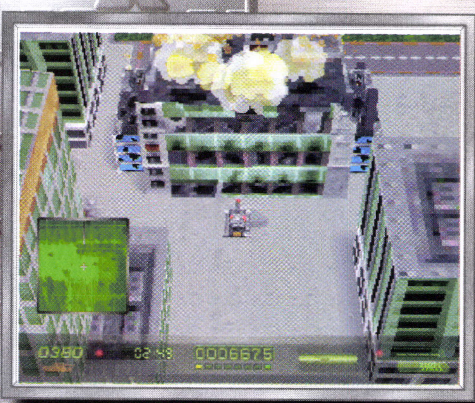
1 Player

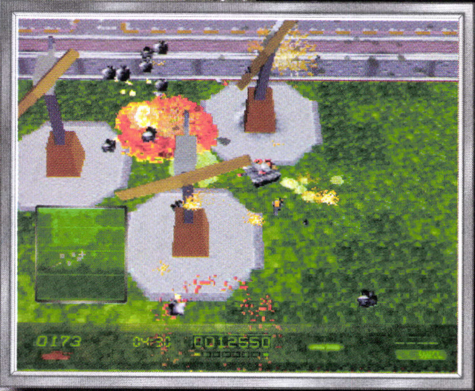
Although I can't wholeheartedly recommend OverBlood, and consequently give it the "Gold X" rating due to its bad control, it's still a good game. If you have the patience and tolerance to persevere and overlook this one fault, then you will probably be happy with your purchase. Plus, who knows when Resident Evil 2 will actually be released in America, so you're going to need something to play and OverBlood just might be it.

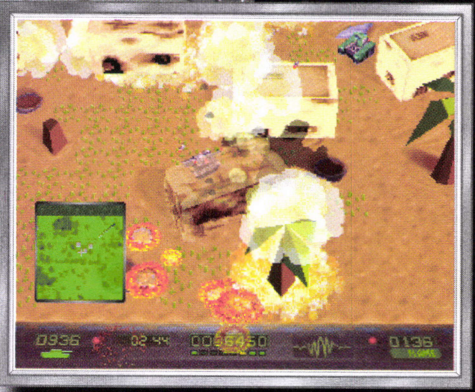
SILVER X

MASS DESTRUCTION

PUBLISHED BY BMG INTERACTIVE — DEVELOPED BY NMS SOFTWARE





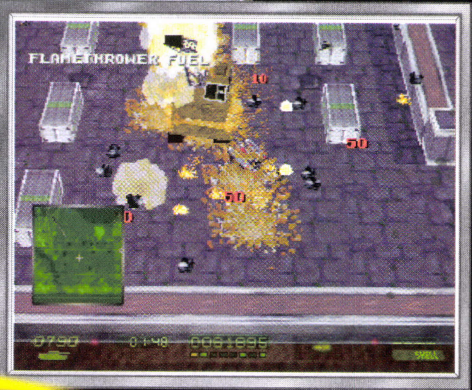


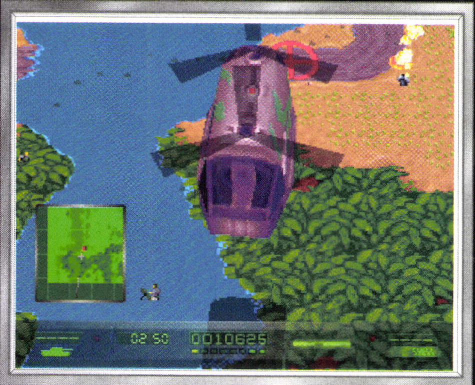
After making a swell PlayStation debut with the very playable 3D platformer Spider, BMG Interactive gives us their second title for Sony's swell game system. Mass Destruction is an action/strategy festival which combines the look and feel of several games that came before it: Desert Strike, Return Fire (which was so darn entertaining we featured it on the cover last year), and an obscure little number called Cannon Fodder (a real-time action/wargame which did fantastic business in Britain, but completely bombed over here — we Americans have no damn taste).

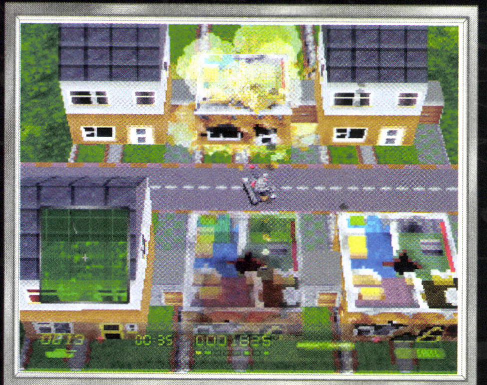
MASS DESTRUCTION

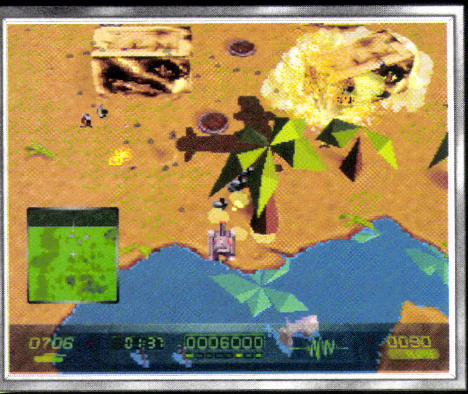
The gameplay is nice and straightforward. First, you choose one of three tanks: the heavily-armored and slow one, the lightly-armored and fast one or the well-balanced one. Then, you choose one of the game's five campaigns, with 24 missions spread between them, and each mission taking place on four varied terrain types (arctic, desert, rural and suburban). Then, you start blowing the crap out of everything, with up to eight different weapons; you start with only two (explosive shells and chain gun), and collect ammo for the six others (high-explosive shells, mines, mortars, vortex bombs, flame-throwers, guided missiles) scattered around the landscape. There are also armour (ooh, the Queen's English spelling) power-ups to replenish your protection as it's slowly whittled down by gun and missile fire from enemy tanks, helicopters, and soldiers.

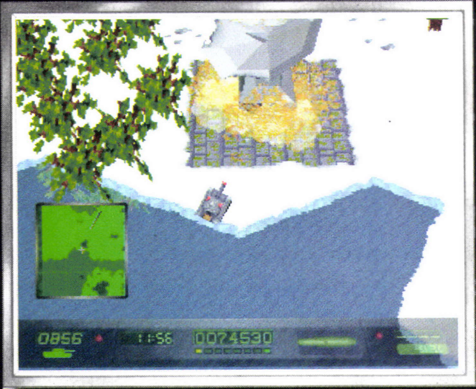
Each mission has specific primary and secondary objectives which almost always involve blowing up certain targets (except for the occasional hostage rescue); you can also fulfill secret "bonus" objectives by blowing up more stuff than the mandatory targets. When you've done the required deeds, you drive to the "pickup point" and are triumphantly whisked away by a huge armored helicopter to do it all over again in the next mission. Mass Destruction has three difficulty levels, and at the easiest one, the game is a cakewalk; it's only at the medium and hard settings

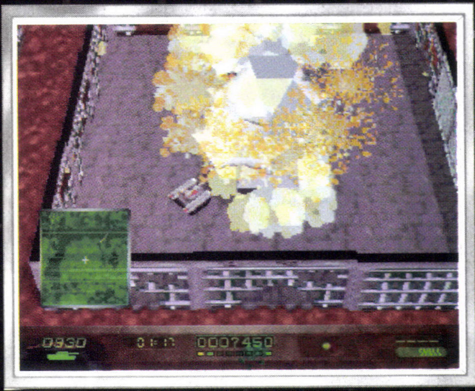


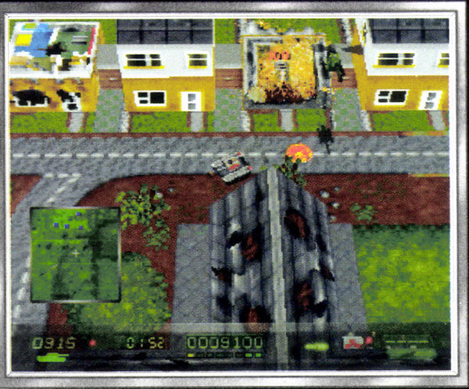


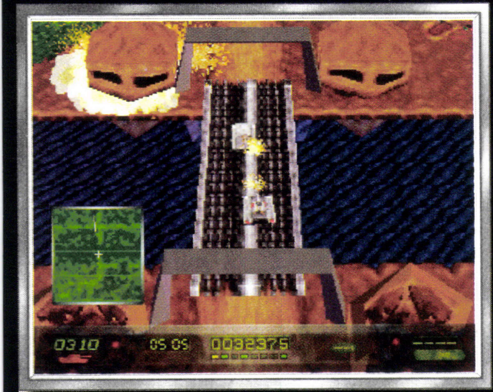


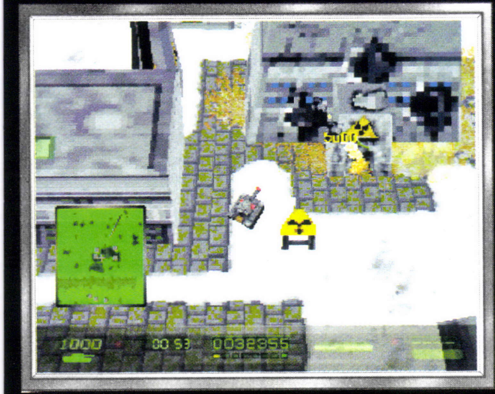


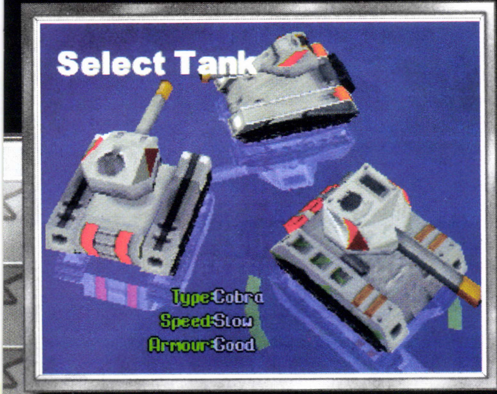


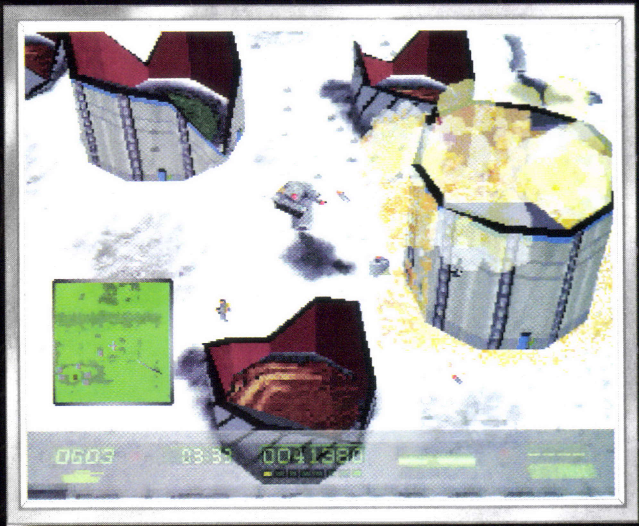












that you have to drive strategically, to shoot without being shot, which means shooting and driving in different directions.

With a name like Mass Destruction, we can safely declare the centerpieces of the game are the spectacular explosions, and the ones in MD are very good — not great — and definitely fun to watch. Buildings explode and fracture under fire, then collapse even further if you keep blasting 'em; bits of smoking shrapnel slowly drift to the ground after a blow-up. The texture maps on the buildings are on the blocky side, and there's no carnage when you shoot individual soldiers, but this is still a nicely programmed and very smooth engine of destruction.

The music is cool and atmospheric — not over-the-top rock, not over-the-top techno, but a happy balance of the two. The sound effects are good; the explosions are meaty, and the soldiers depart this mortal coil with blood-curdling screams that almost make up for the lack of carnage. (I couldn't help but notice some of the soldiers' dying wails sound like they were lifted directly from Cannon Fodder. How naughty!)

Here's my only real complaint: because Mass Destruction has such an extremely well-worn theme — I mean, hell, we've been driving around videogame tanks since Combat on the Atari 2600 two decades ago — there wasn't a single point during the game that I ever felt I was seeing or doing something original. And even if this is your FIRST video game, you'll still find yourself ultimately left empty by the I-blew-everything-up-now-what? gameplay. Mass Destruction is playable and fun, but it doesn't have the originality or depth to be great, or to keep you playing for more than two or three days.

Zach

PS EXTREME

THE BOTTOM LINE

82%

COMPATIBILITY

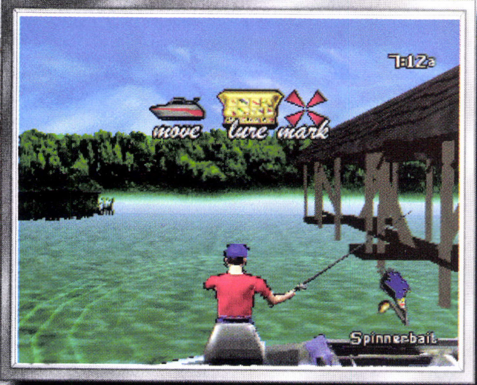
1 Player

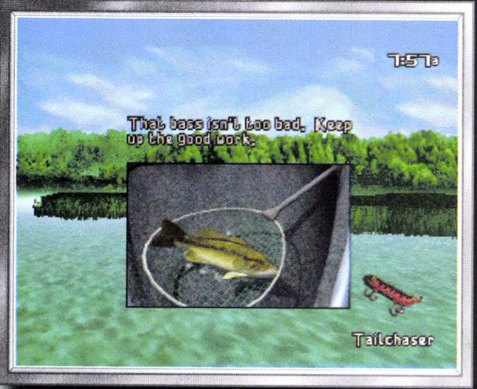
Here's my only real complaint: because Mass Destruction has such an extremely well-worn theme — I mean, hell, we've been driving around videogame tanks since Combat on the Atari 2600 two decades ago — there wasn't a single point during the game that I ever felt I was seeing or doing something original. And even if this is your FIRST video game, you'll still find yourself ultimately left empty by the I-blew-everything-up-now-what? gameplay. Mass Destruction is playable and fun, but it doesn't have the originality or depth to be great, or to keep you playing for more than two or three days.

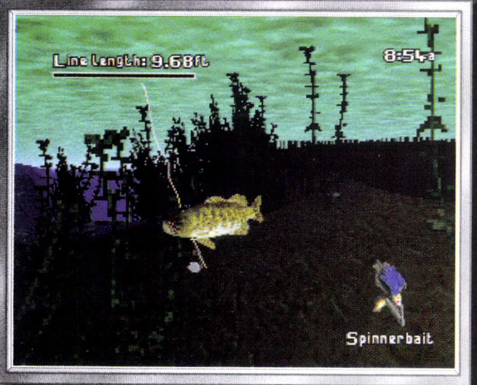
SILVER X

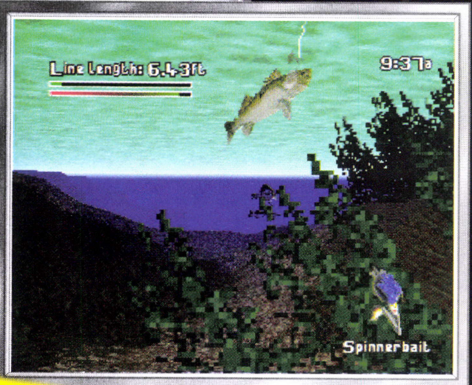
BIG BASS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY HOT B


7:12a
move
lure
mark
Spinnerbait


That bass isn't too bad. Keep up the good work.
7:57a
Tailchaser


Line Length: 9.68ft
8:54a
Spinnerbait


Line Length: 6.43ft
9:37a
Spinnerbait

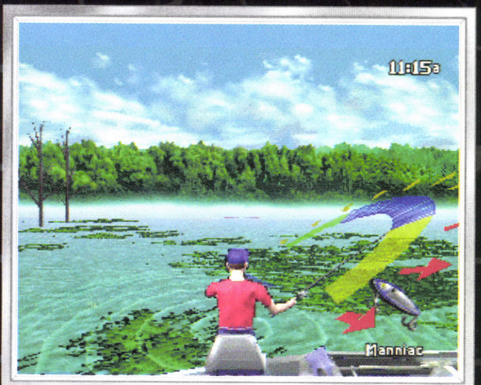
Well Vern, I guess it's safe to say that the PlayStation has hit the mass market! There is no truer indicator of this than the first release from Hot-B, entitled "Big Bass World Championship." That's right boys and girls, it's now possible to experience the drama and excitement, otherwise known as bass fishin, in the comfort of your own home. Shooooooot, that crushed velvet, Lazy Boy recliner was made for a game like this. Heck, those crazy folks at Hot-B even managed to produce the game in true 3D; shazam! Well, like any true sportsman, I'd rather talk about the game than actually participate in it, so what say we get started with this reeeeview.

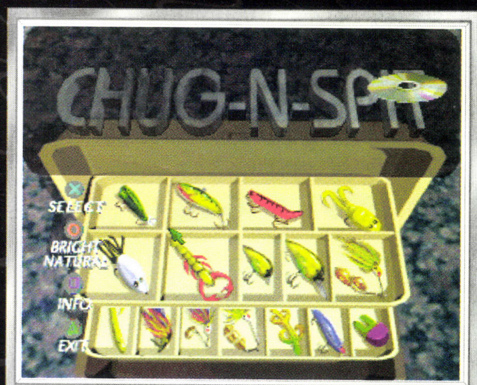
I have long been in awe of the success of fishing games in the video game business; they never seemed like the kind of game that would generate that much excitement. I must admit, however, that my first experience with one (Fishing Derby for the Atari 2600) was a blast. I haven't really cared that much for those that have followed in its footsteps. Most of the fishing games developed, since, have just been more feature driven, rather than focusing on the fun of landing a really, really big one. (I swear it was thiiisss big.) Well, in this grand tradition comes Big Bass World Championship from Hot-B.

BASSIN'
BIG BASS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
START NEW GAME
CONTINUE
HOT·B
©1996

Let me start off by saying that I reviewed a finished copy of the game, since the press copies didn't arrive before BBWC hit the retail shelves. This is usually a sign that the game is sub standard at best. I actually paid for a copy of the game so we could review it. Needless to say, BBWC and I didn't start off on the right foot. That being said, I haven't had this much fun playing a game since ASC's "Ten Pin Alley." I'm sorry if I've tiped my hand for the rest of the review, but I just had to get that off my chest.

Before I get into the details, however, let me give you a basic overview first. BBWC is a bass fishing tournament that takes place over four different lakes with varying weather conditions, ultimately leading up to the opportunity to compete against fishing legend Hank Parker. (Yeah, I know, I've never heard of him either; apparently he's got some fishing show


11:15a
Manniac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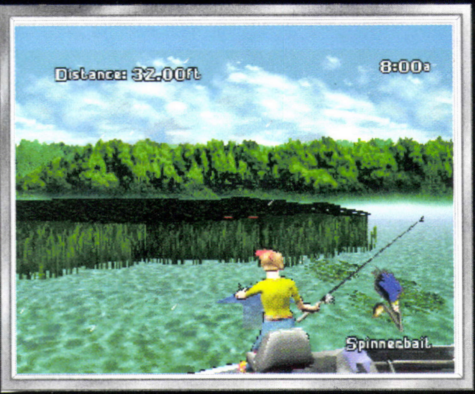
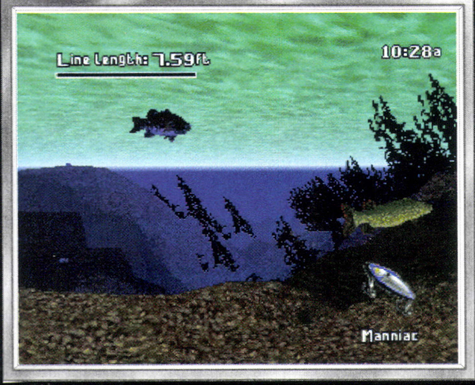
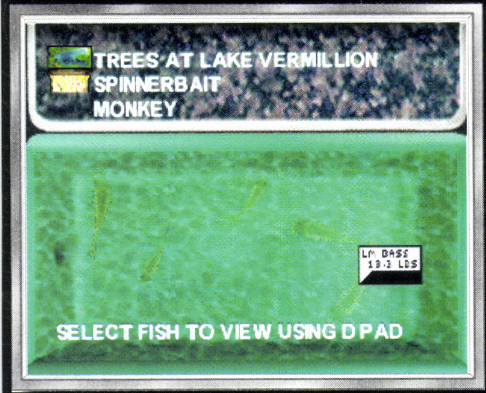
BRIGHT NATURAL
INFO
EXIT





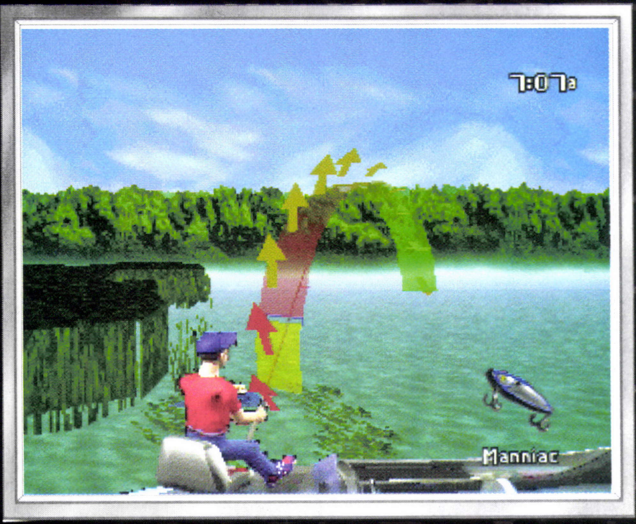


UNCLE JOSH
Rubbermaid
Mann's
HOT-B
Ranger

on TNN.) The way it works is, you start out in the first lake and are given nine and a half hours (one hour and twenty minutes real time) to bring in five of the biggest bass you can find. If your total weight finishes in the top three, you move onto the next round and, if you come in first at the end of the four rounds, you will be crowned the "Big Bass World Champion."

As Hot-B's objective here, was to make this a true fishing simulation; realism is the main focus of the gameplay elements. Every aspect of the true bassin' experience is represented in this game (except the beer and pork rinds, that is). You have your choice of three different rod and reel packages, plus sixteen different lures in two different tones. If you plan on having any success at this game, you will be forced to learn a thing or two about bass fishing. The casting is carried out much like the hitting mechanics in most golf games. You have a power and direction meter that you try to time for the perfect cast. The tension meter tells you if the fish are biting, and the × button transports you underwater for a 3D look at the action. Once you've hooked the big one, you'll have to fight with him to bring him in. You do this by moving the directional pad up and down and back and forth. You also have the obligatory fish radar that helps you target the big'uns, and a trolling motor to help you get in close.

It's almost impossible to criticize the game, as everything you'd ever want in a fishing game is included with this one; but hey, that's what I get paid for, so here goes. If there's one thing that sticks out in my mind, it's the learning curve. It's so steep, that most people will probably stop playing it before they get a chance to really enjoy the game. I urge you to stick with it, you won't be disappointed. Another minor complaint is the constant loading. With the exception of reeling in your line, everything you do initiates another loading sequence. Catching a fish takes long enough, know what I mean Vern? These minor annoyances aside, Big Bass World Championship is just good old fashioned addictive fun. It's not a game for everybody, but if you like fishing games, this ones a keeper!



Alex

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

84%

COMPATIBILITY

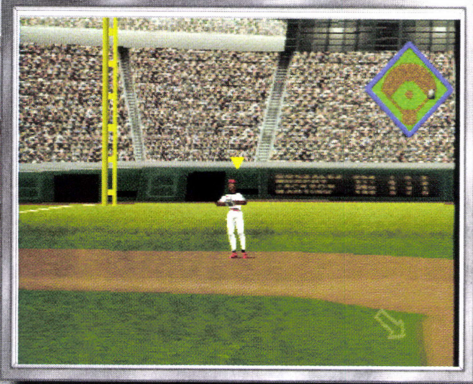
1 Player

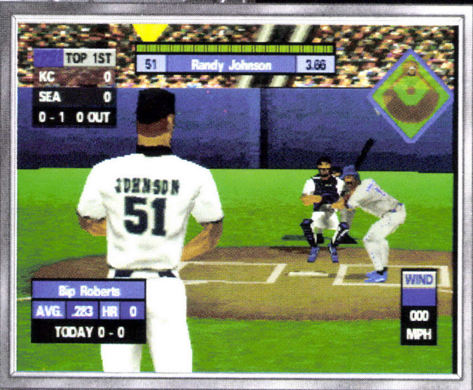
If there's one thing that sticks out in my mind, it's the learning curve. It's so steep, that most people will probably stop playing it before they get a chance to really enjoy the game. I urge you to stick with it, you won't be disappointed. Another minor complaint is the constant loading. With the exception of reeling in your line, everything you do initiates another loading sequence. Catching a fish takes long enough, know what I mean Vern? These minor annoyances aside, Big Bass World Championship is just good old fashioned addictive fun. It's not a game for everybody, but if you like fishing games, this ones a keeper!

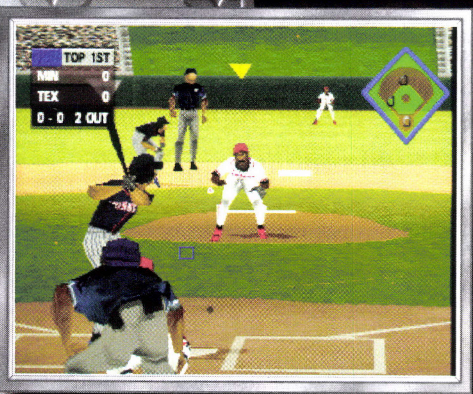
SILVER X

TRIPLE PLAY 98

PUBLISHED BY EA SPORTS — DEVELOPED BY EA CANADA







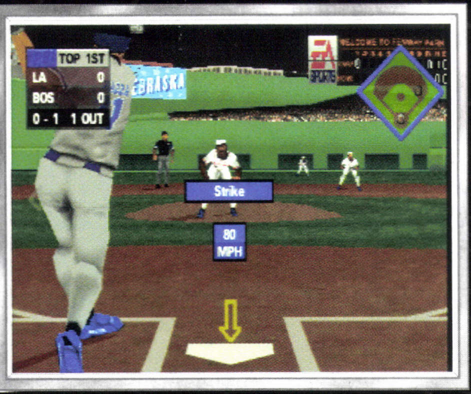
TRIPLE PLAY 98
LOADING...
© 1997 Electronic Arts, All Rights Reserved

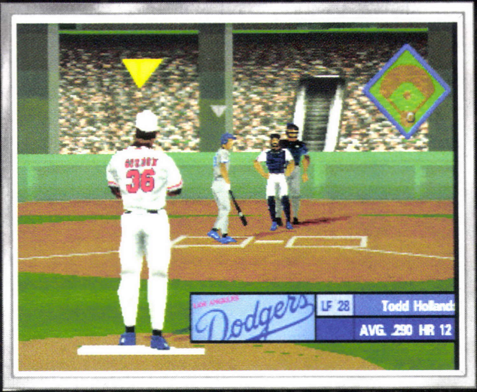
Here it is, baseball fans, the game a lot of you have been chomping at the bit to get your hands on, Triple Play 98. EA Sports has gone to polygon players for 98, added another voice in the booth, and added additional stat tracking capabilities. As is usually the case with me, space is at a premium here, so I'll just have to jump right in and chill on the introductions.

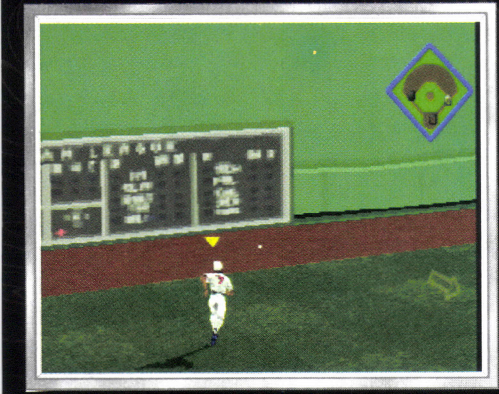
As is the practice with all of EA Sports' titles, there is a features and options list as long as Randy Johnson's left arm. There are five camera views for both pitcher and batter perspectives, giving you a total of ten vantage points from which to play the game. For the most part, you can field confidently in any of the angles, but, for batting purposes, you'll definitely want to stick to ground level or field level views. There's also the "TV Camera mode" which is interesting to look at, but really can't be used for pitching or batting, as the camera (when in the batter view) sits to the left or right (depending on batter) of the umpire, and you can't see the entire strike zone. Obviously, this makes it a bit difficult to get a grasp on the strike zone and, unlike other camera modes, it can't be set to "pitcher always". In TV Camera mode, the pitcher/batter angle switches with each new batter. Also, new for 98 is the choice to play either simulation or arcade mode. In arcade mode you will notice, in general, a higher frequency of dingers and base hits. One of the more interesting new features is the "intelligent crowd" routine. Just like in most real cities, if your team is doing well, there will be fans in the seats. If your record finds your team in the cellar, you could find yourself playing in front of crowds reminiscent of the ones at Comiskey earlier this season. One last noteworthy new item, besides the increased level of stat tracking, is that play-by-play announcer Jim Hughson gets a color commentator in Buck Martinez. This tandem works well in certain situations, but I'll go into more detail on this later. Now, how do graphics and gameplay stack up against Triple Play's number one competitor, Interplay's VR Baseball '97? Let's take a look.

THE BOSTON RED SOX
CHOOSE CONTROLLER
AWAY
All-Star
HOME
Rookie
KANSAS CITY ROYALS
SEATTLE MARINERS
HELP
STADIUM SELECT
LINEUP CARD
PREGAME OPTIONS

Graphically, Triple Play 98 has no equals. The game is flat out gorgeous, with the smoothest and most detailed polygon players ever seen. Names and numbers are clearly displayed on the back of the jerseys, and the characters' shapes are more rounded and defined than those of the players in VR Baseball '97. The stadiums are all real time, 3D rendered to perfection, with a lot more color and background detail than found in VR. Although, I am a bit confused with the fact that all the stadiums have foul poles that are mounted into the dirt on the warning tracks! What's up with that? The use of shadows and the nighttime effects are fantastic, as are the animations of the players — there are more frames of animation in the players' swings and throws than those of the characters in VR. The flip tosses and head first dives are meticulously framed, but the additional steps that the fielders take after scooping up a grounder can sometimes prove costly. Example;

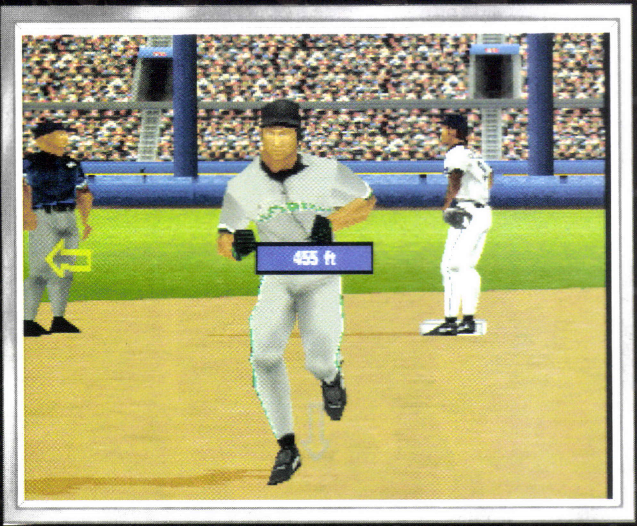


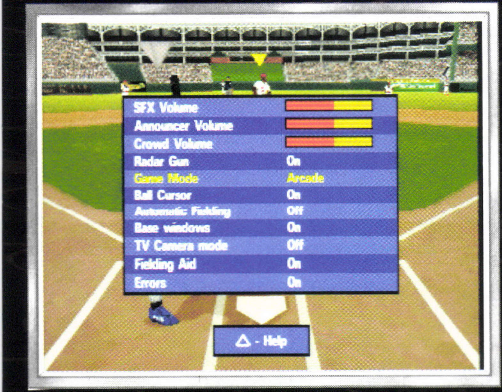




the ball is hit to the right side of my shortstop, and he moves over to field it, and then (automatically, every time) he takes three steps to get himself balanced before he throws to first base. This has lead to more singles than it should — infielders don't have to take three steps before they throw every time!

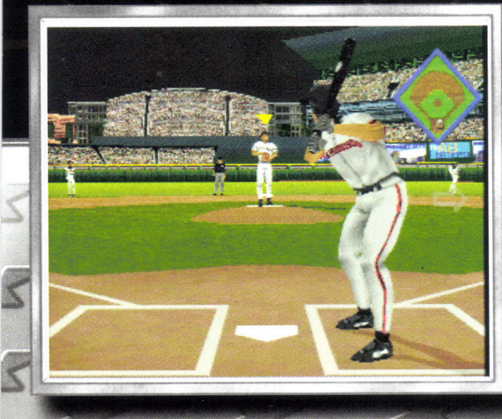
As far as gameplay is concerned, you'll remember from my review (May issue) of VR Baseball '97 that it had its share of AI problems. Well, Triple Play '98 has its allotment as well but, like VR, nothing that makes the game unplayable, just annoying at times. For instance, I had the bases loaded, with two outs, Bonds up, and he hits a one hopper to the first baseman. Well, instead of taking a few steps to the bag for the easy, and last, out, the computer throws to home trying to get the force out there. I was safe and still at bat, when the inning should have been over. Also, like in VR, there have been many occasions where the computer tries to bunt with a player (like Frank Thomas, for example) that should be swinging for the fences. Then, there's the play-by-play (none in VR). I know there's the ability to turn the volume all the way down but, if it's going to be in the game, why can't it be done correctly? Too many times ol' Jim says something like "hit to the pitcher" and the ball is a line drive that lands in the gap between left and center field. I like the fact that he keeps you up to date on what the batter did his last time up, or how many strikeouts the pitcher has, but, historically, the actual play-by-play of a game has never been proven to be anything other than inaccurate. The color is used sparingly, as there isn't really enough time between pitches to have Buck comment other than after a hit or out. The best use of the color is before the game starts, when Buck gives his opinions on the starting pitchers. This is interesting to listen to and is pretty much right on target.




SFX Volume
Announcer Volume
Crowd Volume
Radar Gun On
Game Mode Arcade
Ball Cursor On
Automatic Fielding Off
Base windows On
TV Camera mode Off
Fielding Aid On
Errors On

Although both Triple Play 98 and VR Baseball '97 are solid titles that have minor flaws that keep them being outstanding titles, the nod goes to EA for their more lifelike graphical presentation. The gameplay is good, the stat tracking abundant, and the graphics impeccable.

Eric



PS EXTREME THE BOTTOM LINE

90%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

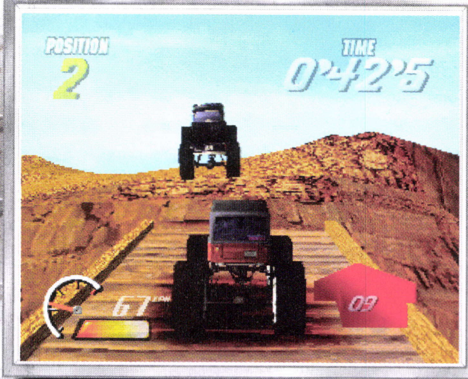
Multi Tap Adaptable 1–8 Players

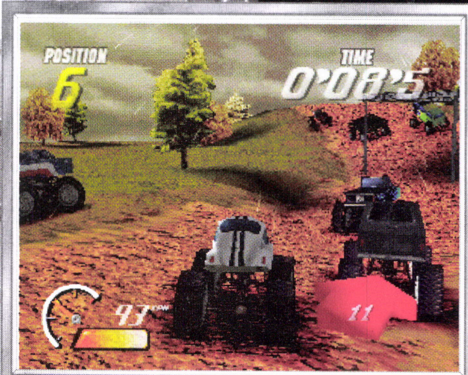
Although both Triple Play 98 and VR Baseball '97 are solid titles that have minor flaws that keep them being outstanding titles, the nod goes to EA for their more lifelike graphical presentation. The gameplay is good, the stat tracking abundant, and the graphics impeccable.

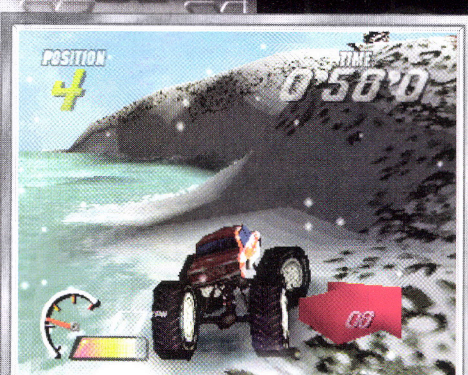
GOLD X

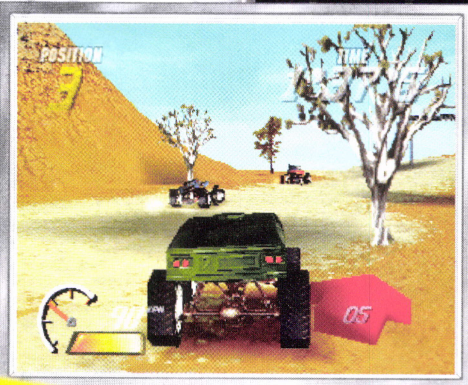
THUNDER TRUCK RALLY

PUBLISHED BY PSYGNOSIS — DEVELOPED BY REFLECTIONS





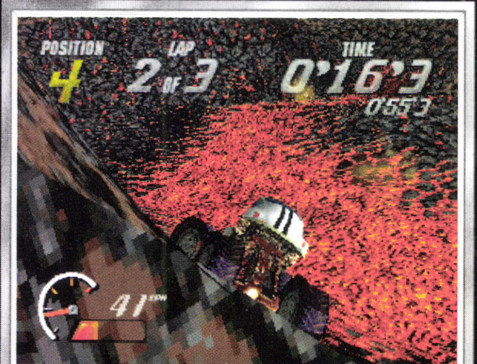




THUNDER
TRUCK Rally

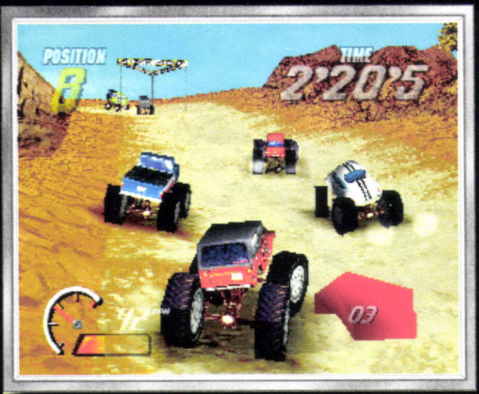
Destruction Derby 2 kicks up some mud! This month, Psygnosis throws their hat into the off-road racing arena, with the release of Thunder Truck Rally. The title, developed by Reflections, is built around the design group's Destruction Derby 2 engine and allows players to get behind the wheel of one of the big beasts, and pilot it around a number of circuits and open courses. How does it stack-up against Test Drive Off-Road, Hardcore 4x4 and Rally Cross? Let's take a look.

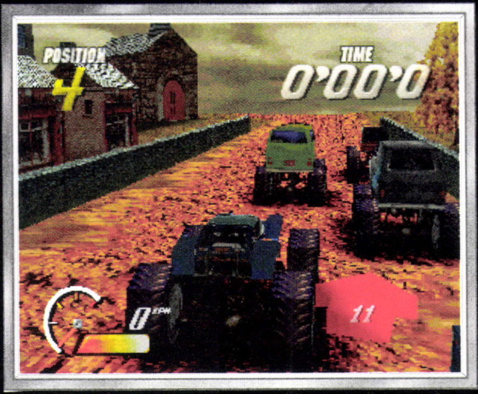
The essence of the gameplay in Thunder Truck Rally is that, like DD2, you accumulate points (in Circuit Racing — Championship Mode and Endurance Mode, the game's two main modes of play) depending on your finishing position in the race. Accumulate enough of them, and you will be able to move out of your Division (you start the game in Division 3) and compete against better drivers on additional tracks. You begin with four different tracks. The last track being the "Car Crushing" course where, oddly enough, your goal is to accumulate as many points as you can — by smashing a row of junkers. Most of the game's strategy exists in the truck selection screen. The game features a damage meter that grows as you smack into the sides of hills or other, bigger vehicles. So, vehicle selection becomes critical. I am currently playing my season with the VW Bug on stilts (Michelle) — fast, handles well and fits snugly in tight places. But, when it hits one of the big boys, it takes a considerable amount of damage. So, my plan of action is to avoid contact and use my speed and maneuverability to snake around the other drivers.

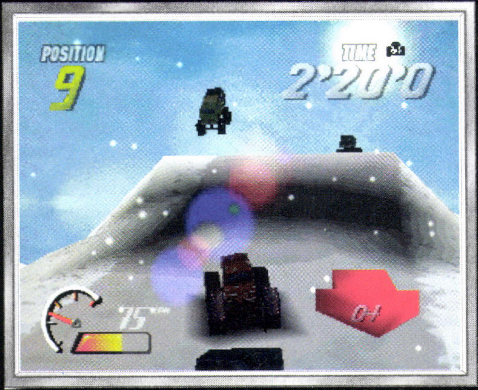


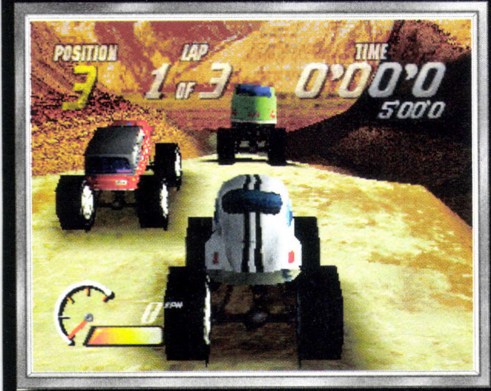
When you start out in Division 3, you are pitted against nine other competitors and are placed in the fourth position for the first race, in a staggered start. As you move into Division 2, you begin on the same circuit that you ended Division 3 on (Puma Pass), in a deeper position, and are then treated to two new courses (Car Crushing stays the same). Essentially, this is the only change in the difficulty level, as (in Normal mode) it still remains pretty easy to finish first in all three divisions in the first season — the exception to this rule being the fact that the courses get longer in the upper divisions. This requires that you think more about accelerating over those dramatic slopes. Damage control becomes essential if you're piloting one of the smaller, quicker vehicles. You will often find yourself pacing and praying as you enter the final lap (each race is three laps in length).

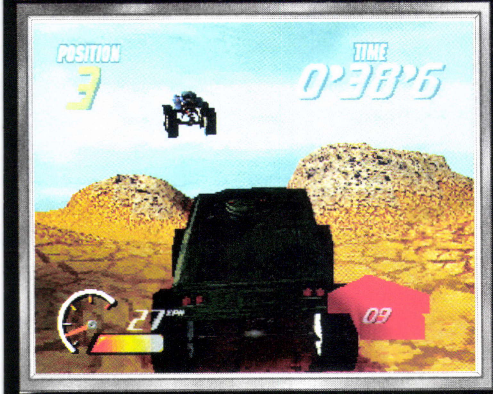
TTR's Endurance Mode is also a blast to play — and much more than one of those freebie-extra kind of deals

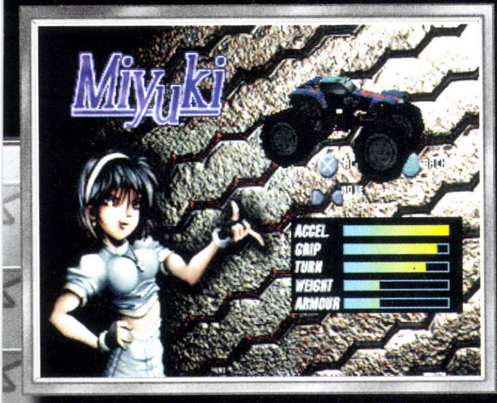








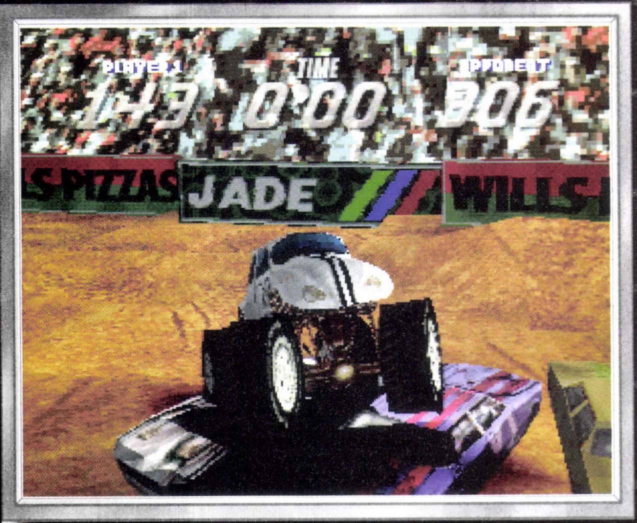




that you get in a lot of games. (You know, where it's not really a stand-alone game, but a neat, little addition.) Endurance mode follows the pattern of Circuit Racing, offering multiple season play in a go-anywhere environment — with the goal being to make it through a series of checkpoints by any route possible, AND finish first doing it! Because of the open environment, there is much more polygon-pop in this mode, but the freedom of movement makes it worth that small price. In addition, TTR offers Practice, Time Trial and multiple player modes, which are exactly what they advertise themselves to be.

In terms of how the driving experience 'feels', your vehicles control very well and true-to-life — much like the beasts that they are. You can really feel the push of trying to urge your vehicle over a steep hill, or the air you catch when going over one at top speed. The other games in this category have had their share of problems, control-wise, but TTR is pure buttah!

Graphically, TTR scores big points for its detailed textures, depicting rock, snow, grass, lava, etc., and the VERY fast frame rate in gameplay. There is some occasional pop-up, but nothing that gets in the way of enjoying the game. Graphically, think of it as Destruction Derby 2 in the mountains. The game's nine different vehicles are also drawn very well, with excellent animation on impact, and a detailed depiction of the tires and suspension. In addition, there are four different camera angles (all four are very playable), including a toss-your-cookies, Ralph-on-Malph, 1st person mode that is the fastest of the group. Sound effects and music are decent; nothing great, nothing to complain about.



In conclusion, Thunder Truck Rally ends up as our off-road game of choice, among the current crop of four. It's the best looking, the one with the most accurate depiction of mountainous terrain, and the one with the longest life expectancy — as a result of its multiple season play and different gameplay modes. Psygnosis and Reflections continue to prove that they are among the elite of the electronic driving world and a fun time is guaranteed for all.

Dave

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

97%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

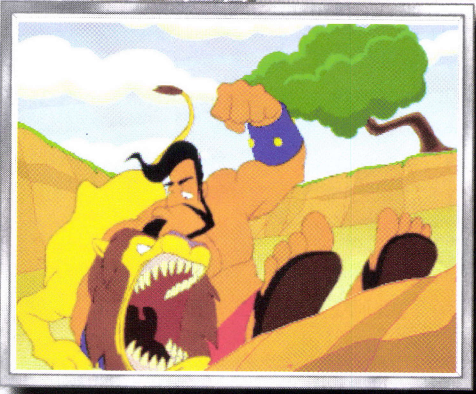
Analog Joystick Compatible

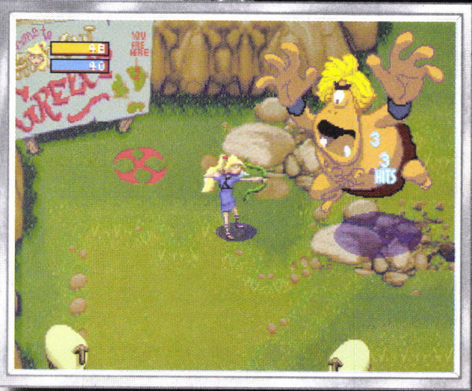
In conclusion, Thunder Truck Rally ends up as our off-road game of choice, among the current crop of four. It's the best looking, the one with the most accurate depiction of mountainous terrain, and the one with the longest life expectancy — as a result of its multiple season play and different gameplay modes. Psygnosis and Reflections continue to prove that they are among the elite of the electronic driving world and a fun time is guaranteed for all.

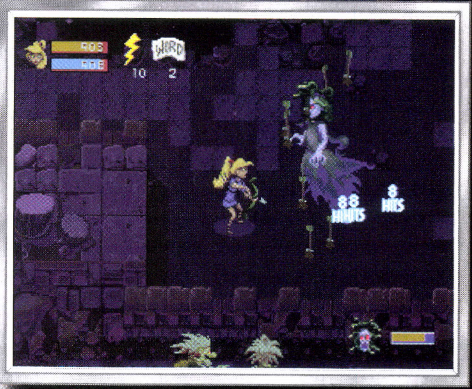
GOLD X

HERC'S ADVENTURES

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY LUCASARTS





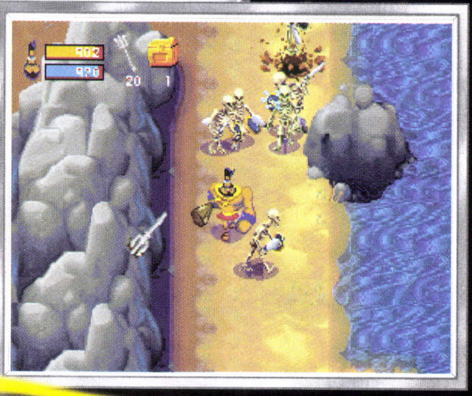


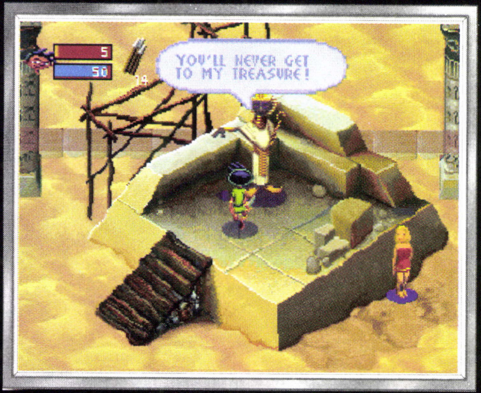
It seems as though LucasArts is on a roll these days. Both Rebel Assault II and Dark Forces are very playable conversions for the PlayStation and have sold better than expected. (See the latest TRST data for more info.) Ballblazer Champions scored a "Gold X" in our May issue and looks to be another leader at the retail shelves this spring. The next trick up LucasArts' sleeve is the campy "Herc's (as in Hercules) Adventures." Developed by the team that brought you "Zombies Ate My Neighbors" on the SuperNES and originally previewed in our October '96 issue, Herc's Adventures is the latest in a series of games from LucasArts that emphasize humor in an adventure setting. Who can forget Maniac Mansion? The folks at Lucas have been very successful bringing quality titles to market this year, and without taking the fun out of the rest of the review; with this release the streak should continue.

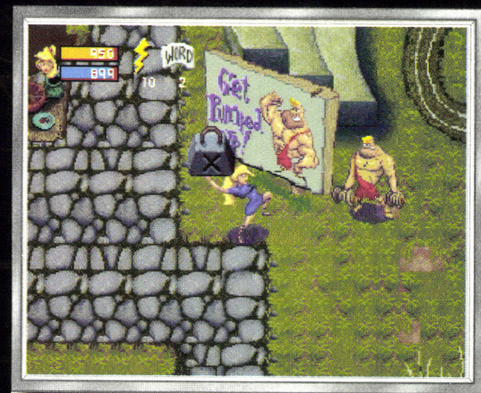
So, what do we get with Herc? Basically what you're looking at here is an epic adventure to save western civilization from Hades, the evil god of the underworld. Hades, in his infinite wisdom has decided to make the lovely fertility goddess, Persephone, queen of his dead minions. While imprisoned, life at home begins to decay because she is unable to produce the new Spring. If Spring doesn't come soon, Greece will face mass starvation . Zeus, the big cahuna of all gods, has summoned his three favorite heroes to help free Persephone and save Greece from ruin. Your choice of heroes include the formidable Hercules, the lovely Atlanta and the Argonautless Jason. Each hero comes complete with his or her own unique set of strengths, weaknesses and weapons, and also has the ability to develop new powers as they progress through the game. The perspective is top-down and emphasizes action with a little light puzzle solving thrown in for good measure (actually, it's quite reminiscent of the Fractured Fairy Tales cartoon series). There are over forty worlds to explore and can be played with one or two players.

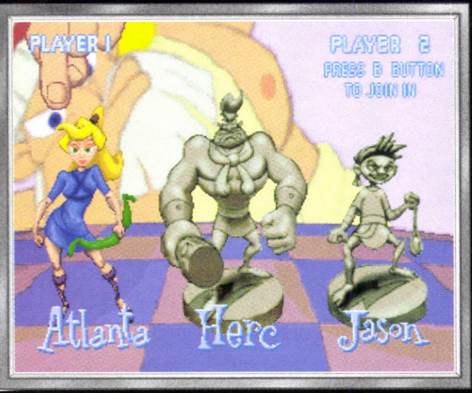
HERC'S ADVENTURES
PRESS START BUTTON
COPYRIGHT 1997 LUCASARTS ENTERTAINMENT CO.

Graphically, the game is classic cartoon style, with vibrant colors and loony characters scattered throughout. Although there is only one camera angle, it works very well for this style of gameplay. You won't find yourself out of place in the middle of the action sequences, or unable to place your weapons where you want them, when you want 'em. In this option obsessed game world we live in, fewer choices are rarely better than more, but in this case, one is all you need.

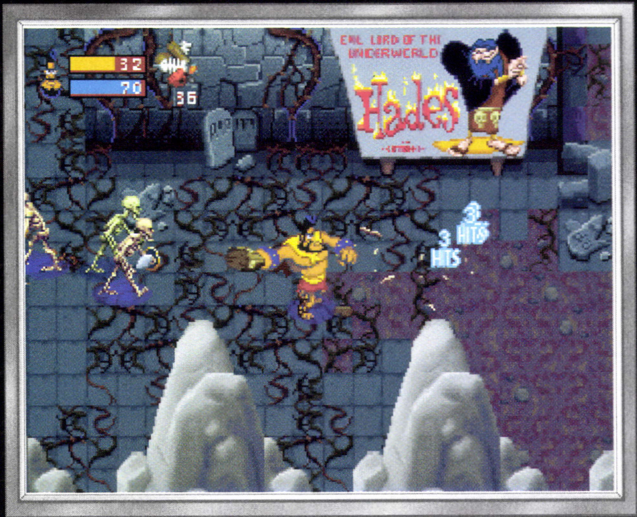








The play mechanics are as simple as it gets. Explore the surroundings, talk to inhabitants, gather information, pick up clues, energy, weapons, and beat the living daylights out of any bad guys you may run into. If by chance you lose one of the battles, you're sent to the underworld, where you have the opportunity to fight your way back to the present. When you encounter the ever-present bad guys, you can either use your generic weapon or one of the many different ones you have the opportunity to accumulate along the way. This list includes some pretty hilarious choices, including but not limited to, a Meduca head, bad breath, lightening bolts, flame throwers, ray guns and freeze tablets. Each weapon carries a different level of damage, not to mention comedy factor. The bad breath is a riot. There is also a lot of picking up and throwing. Don't miss an opportunity to pick up boulders and shacks, there's usually a "bonus" underneath, and they make terrific weapons. The object in each area is to find the key that unlocks the door to the next area. Finding the key generally involves doing quite a bit of searching; you can't just blow through the bad guys and expect to get to the next level. You have to explore the towns and villages.



The combination of cartoon styling and classic gameplay make slipping into an eight hour session of Herc's Adventures easier than coming to work here at Dimension Publishing. Everything you need to keep you coming back is in this game: thoughtful gameplay, unique worlds to explore, more than enough action and just the right amount of puzzle solving. It's not perfect, the music grates on your nerves after extended periods at the controls; there is also quite a bit of slow down throughout the game and the 2D presentation seemed dated after a while. Ultimately, however, the game is just plain fun to play and should appeal to a wide variety of gamers.

Alex

PS EXTREME THE BOTTOM LINE

88%

COMPATIBILITY

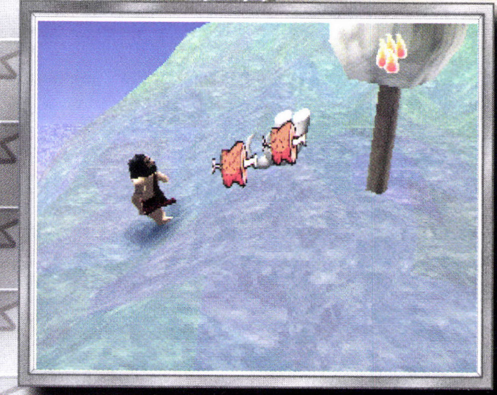
1or 2 Players

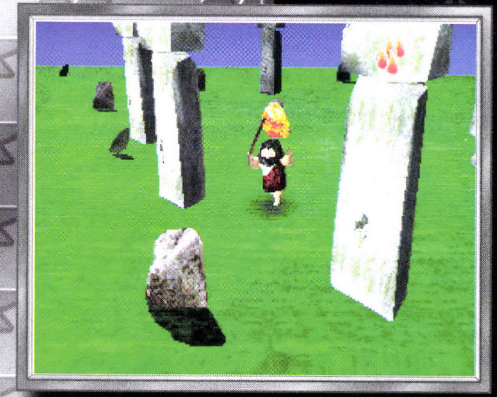
Everything you need to keep you coming back is in this game: thoughtful gameplay, unique worlds to explore, more than enough action and just the right amount of puzzle solving. It's not perfect, the music grates on your nerves after extended periods at the controls; there is also quite a bit of slow down throughout the game and the 2D presentation seemed dated after a while. Ultimately, however, the game is just plain fun to play and should appeal to a wide variety of gamers.

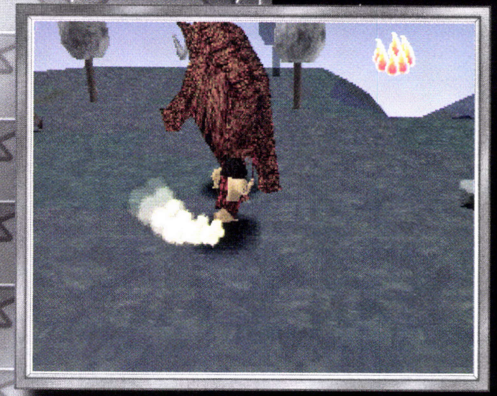
SILVER X

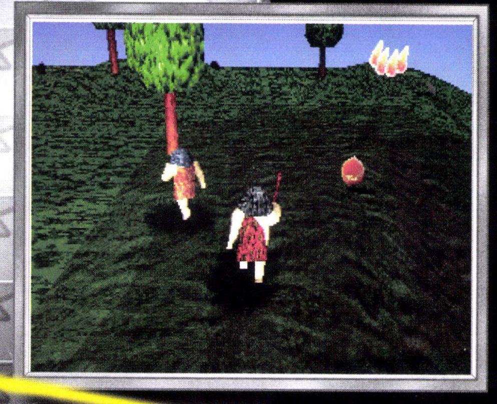
TAIL OF THE SUN

PUBLISHED BY SONY — DEVELOPED BY ART DINK



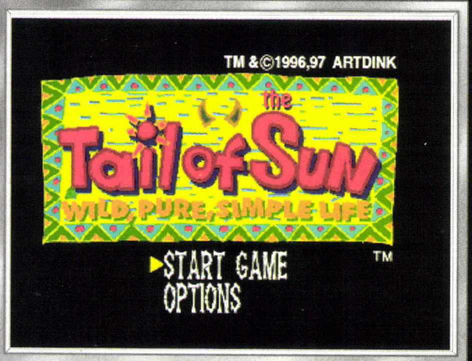






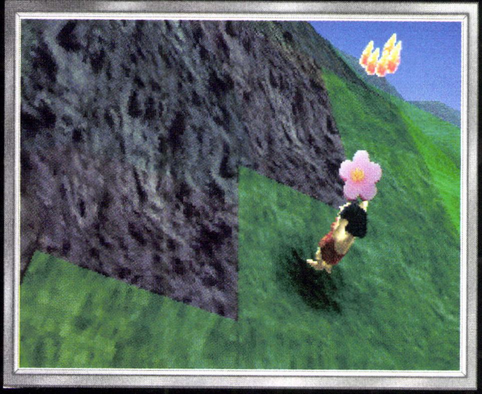
Man, what a difficult review this is to write — and not just because the part of my brain responsible for producing creative juices doesn't kick in until about 2 P.M., while I find myself picking crud out of my eyes this morning. (I'm getting onto an early schedule at the request of — well, okay, the demand of — my 9-to-5 girlfriend to increase our "quality time" together. Man, I am so whipped.) No, this review is tough because Tail of the Sun is an extremely original game which becomes extremely boring after eight hours. How do you score a game with great intentions and so-so gameplay? (Pretty low, if you didn't already peek at the score.)

Tail of the Sun (subtitled "Wild, Pure, Simple Life") puts you into the loose-fitting animal skins of a caveperson, exploring the prehistoric world and doing what Neanderthals do. Sony themselves admit this is "the weirdest title... for the PlayStation this year." It's even weirder than Artdink's previous stuff, the boring Aquanaut's Holiday and the brilliant Carnage Heart.

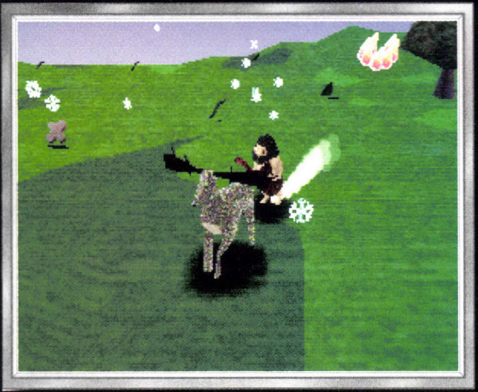


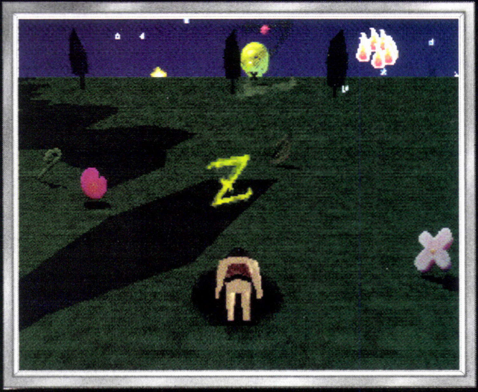
The most common task in Tail of the Sun is to gather food; lucky for you that the landscape is literally covered with edible items, which you pick up with a press of the Δ button. (Most of the items are, I kid you not, Japanese rice cakes.) Each item specifically improves one of the six tribe statistics: Brain (which makes the tribe build better weapons faster), Swim (which turns your dog-paddlers into breast-strokers), Hand (which increases the strength of weapon strikes), Propagate (which makes your tribe breed like bunnies), Jump (which lets your caveman leap higher and farther), and the self-explanatory Run. You can also boost a particular stat by visiting the magical pillars south of the village to get a "power tattoo."

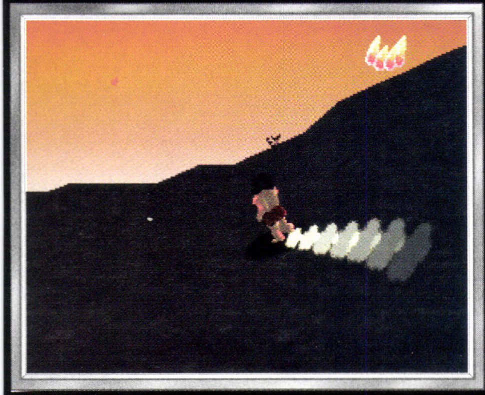
The second task of Ye Very Olde Caveman is to hunt animals and obtain meat for the folks back in the village. At the start of the game, you don't even have a weapon to hunt with, but as the tribe grows in size and smarts, you're given a series of more potent killing devices (clubs, axes, spears). Some animals run away when you whack 'em, but others fight back — in particular, the woolly mammoth, the biggest and most dangerous critter in the game. Bumping off a mammoth also rewards you with tusks, which are the game's biggest treasure. Tusks are used to build a sky-scraping tower in the center of the village, with which your tribe climbs to the tail of the sun (hey, the title!) and "wins" the game.

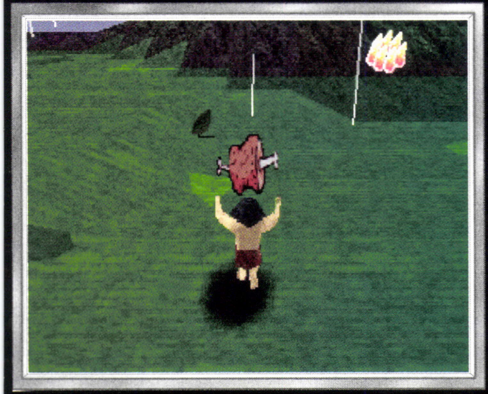


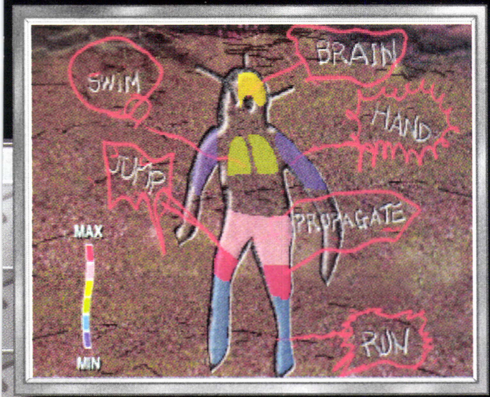
The game world is large and diverse, with forests, deserts, snow, and towering mountain ranges. Time flies quickly, and when the game shifts from day to night, your caveman eventually falls asleep, even if he's currently running up a mountain or getting chewed on by a sabertooth tiger. (You can prematurely wake









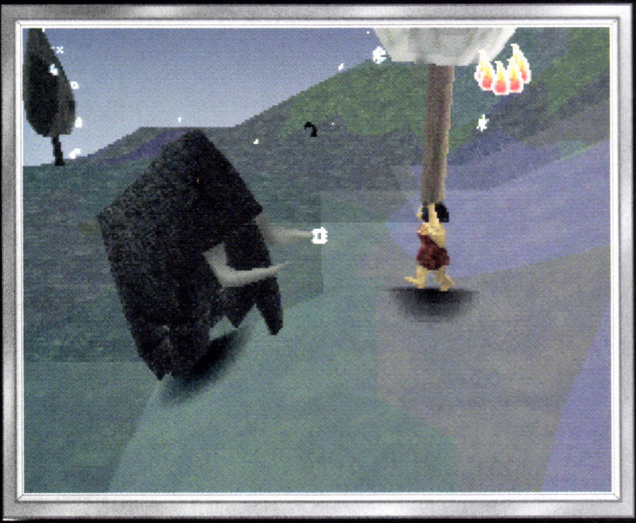


up your caveman, but he has to catch up on his sleep eventually; better to let him get his Zs unless it's an emergency situation.) Tribesmen also grow older over time, eventually kicking the bucket of old age if they don't drown or get eaten first.

Sadly, we must now shift from describing to complaining. First — and this is the game's smallest infraction — it's tough to find your way around the massive world because there are no navigational tools and precious few landmarks. It's safe to say this was an intentional design decision — cavemen didn't have compasses or maps — but it makes finding any interesting location in the game (and there are only about 50, including caves, statues, giant footprints and dead bodies) a tiring chore. A bigger complaint: Whenever you pick up a piece of meat or a mammoth tusk, you can't carry it and collect more stuff; you have to immediately return to the village to drop it off. Again, this is much like real caveman life — it's hard to do a whole lot when you're lugging around a 20-pound hunk of beef or a five-foot-long piece of ivory — but it makes the gameplay repetitive, because it seems like you're always leaving the village (which you are) instead of simply exploring the countryside.

The biggest complaint: After eight or nine hours, you've seen and done just about everything. Your tribe has built the most sophisticated huts and most powerful weapons, and you've explored pretty much the entire world. All that's left to do is "finish" the game like so: run up and left from the village into the arctic regions, kill a mammoth, take a tusk, return to the village, and repeat. The game has six endings and three difficulty levels, but why go through the same dull process for another ten hours to see another ending sequence?

Artdink wanted to make a "wild, pure, simple" game instead of overloading it with options, and that's exactly what they've done; I feel strange criticizing what it doesn't have when the designers didn't want it in there anyway. Compare this game to Artdink's earlier Aquanaut's Holiday: both have slow-paced gameplay that require a lot of work for a little reward, a combination which most people call "boring as hell." Me, I had SOME fun with it, but I'm never going to pick it up again, now that the review's done. Probably not a good sign.



Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

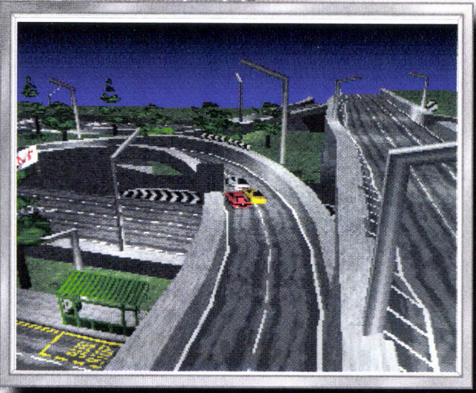
78%

COMPATIBILITY

1 Player

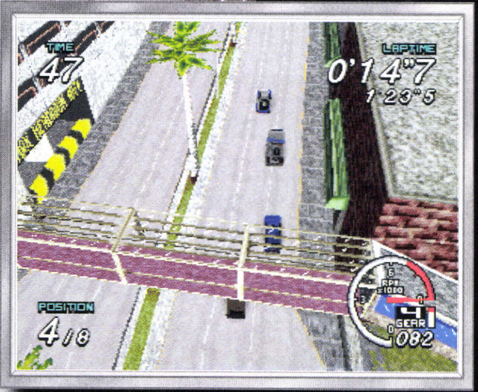
Artdink wanted to make a "wild, pure, simple" game instead of overloading it with options, and that's exactly what they've done; I feel strange criticizing what it doesn't have when the designers didn't want it in there anyway. Compare this game to Artdink's earlier Aquanaut's Holiday: both have slow-paced gameplay that require a lot of work for a little reward, a combination which most people call "boring as hell." Me, I had SOME fun with it, but I'm never going to pick it up again, now that the review's done. Probably not a good sign.

BRONZE X

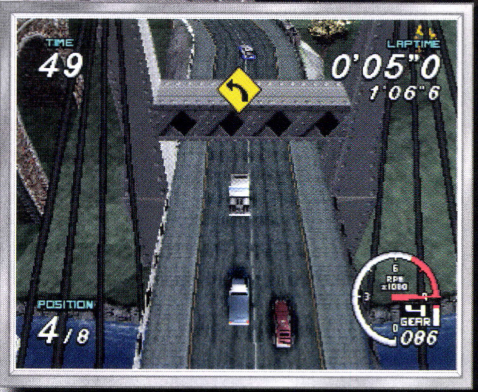


RUSH HOUR

PUBLISHED BY PSYGNOSIS — DEVELOPED BY CLOCKWORK GAMES


TIME
47
LAPTIME
0'14"7
1'23"5
POSITION
4/8
GEAR
4
082

Well, what can you say about another driving game? I mean, let's face it, if there's one category with no shortage of quality titles, it's racing games. Nevertheless, I still enjoy a good one as much as the next guy, and if it comes from Psygnosis, chances are it's a quality title. Enter "Rush Hour", the latest offering from the publisher of Formula1 and the Destruction Derby series (one of my all time favorite racers). This one's a little different than the aforementioned titles, and is definitely geared toward the arcade gamer.


TIME
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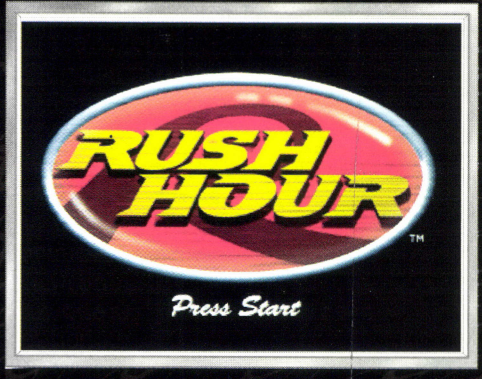
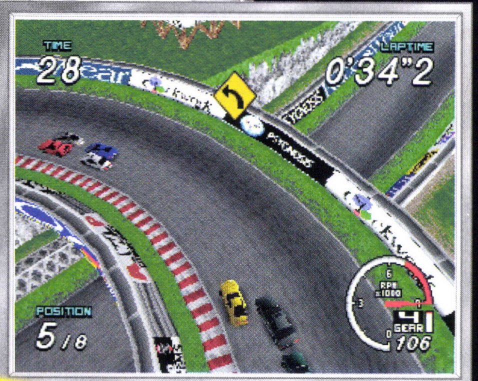
LAPTIME
0'05"0
1'06"6
POSITION
4/8
GEAR
4
086

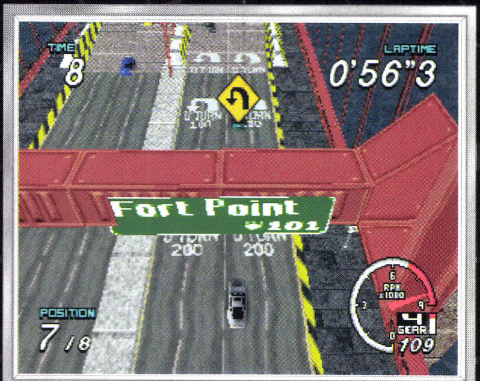
The first thing you'll notice about the game, is its top down perspective. By now, any thoughts of Rush Hour being a racing "sim" should be deader than a door nail. The basic format of the game goes something like this: It's you against seven other cars, racing against each other and the clock to, hopefully, get to the next level. How do you get to the next level, you say? Simple, just finish first in each race; coming in second or third won't help, you need to place first to advance. You can also select between a single race or time trial mode, as well. You will start off with four cars to choose from and, if you finish first in each race, you'll be rewarded with four additional racers. There are two classes of cars: The first is "high performance" and the other is "heavy metal". As the names would imply, the first category is your basic Porsche, Ferrari menu (although I don't understand the Volvoesque sedan choice) and the second category is a monster truck, off-road kind of thing.


RUSH HOUR
Press Start

Skill levels range from novice to professional, with a stop at intermediate on the way. Each level changes the number of laps required to finish and, in the professional mode, there are four additional tracks you must beat.

So, at this point, you're probably saying: Big deal, been there done that! Well, to a certain extent, you have; but don't be too quick to judge, after all, this is a Psygnosis game. After a few quick laps, I was immediately reminded of the arcade classic "Super Sprint" and, believe me, that's a good thing. Much like the arcade racer, the focus is not so much on speed, as it is your ability to control your car, while at the same time knocking the other cars out of the race. Of course, attempting that also increases your chances of sustaining damage


TIME
28
LAPTIME
0'34"2
PSYGNOSIS
POSITION
5/8
GEAR
4
106


TIME
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LAPTIME
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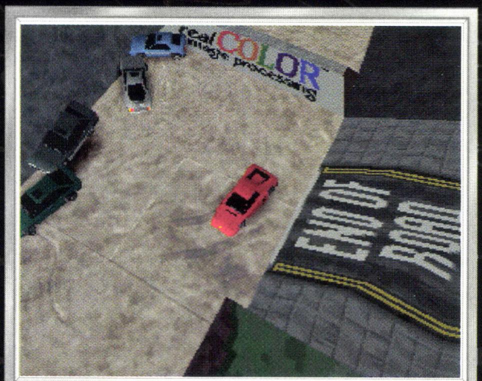
U TURN
200
POSITION
7/8
GEAR
4
109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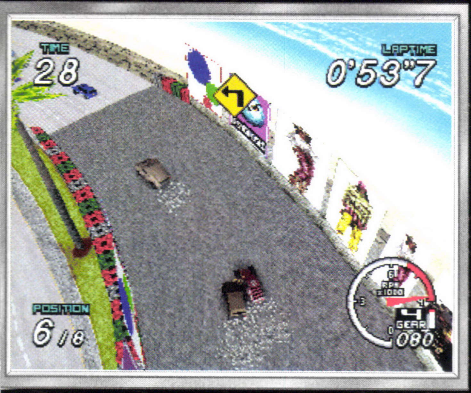
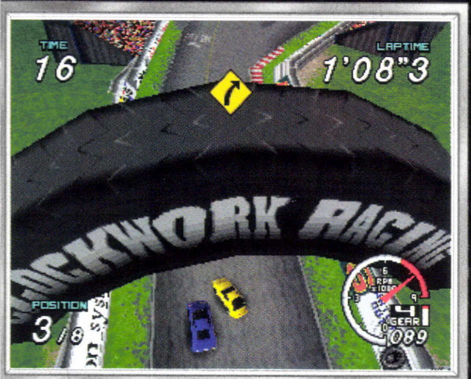
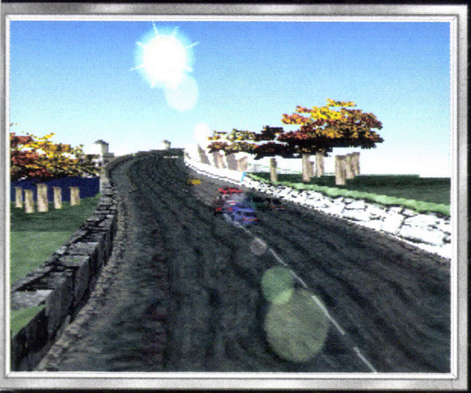
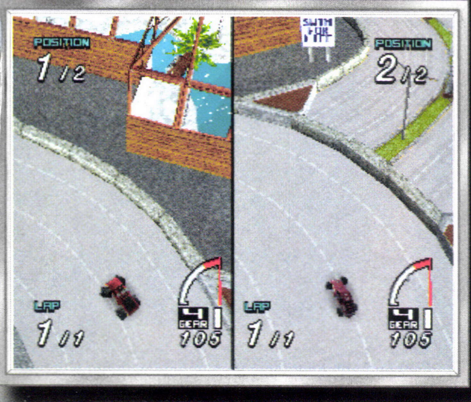
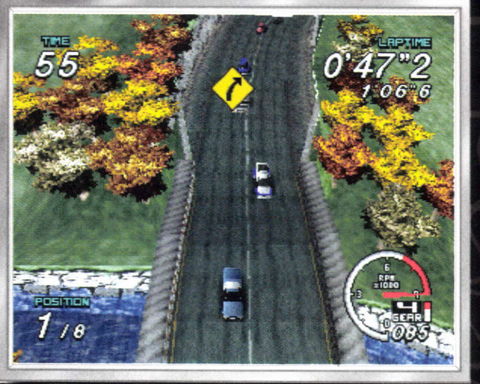
END OF ROAD





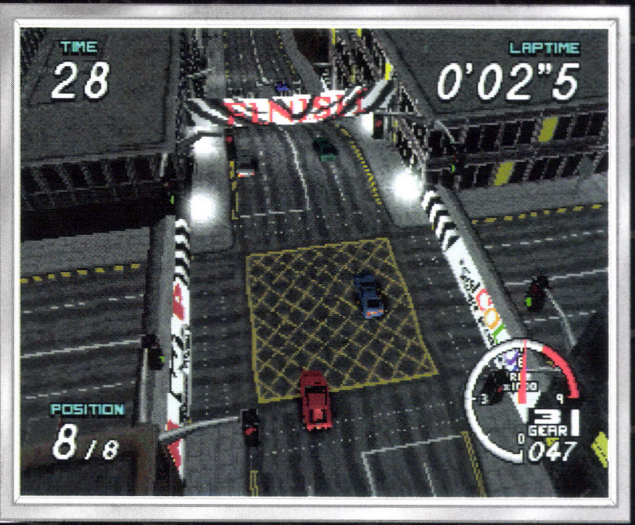






and, ultimately running, out of time (thus the whole rush hour theme). The top down perspective requires a completely different set of skills to race effectively. You can't take what you learned in Rage Racer and apply it here; you'll be a cellar dweller for sure. You can, however, zoom in and out (I guess it's actually up and down) to get a different perspective, but it doesn't change the camera angle any. You do have a choice of steering control, which makes it a little easier to handle the top down perspective, but it still takes a while to get used to.

Well, after a considerable amount of time with the game, I've pretty much come to the conclusion that I've been here and done this many times before. There just aren't any elements of this game that I haven't experienced multiple times in the past. Sure, the top down perspective is sort of cool, but after a while it just gets annoying. I spend more time concentrating on the scenery than I do on the race. The sounds, or lack thereof, of the cars do nothing to enhance the gameplay, and the soundtrack, while entertaining, is rather monotonous. The most disappointing aspect of all, is that it could have been so much more. The multiple short cuts are cool, but how about go anywhere gameplay (like your choice of freeways or side streets)? The soundtrack was nice, but how about real "rush hour" noise? Even though you can sustain damage, it doesn't have any major impact; how about parts flying off, and cars disintegrating before your eyes? Finally, some real rush hour dilemmas like accidents, stalls and some drive by shootings. Now that's a real rush hour! Don't get me wrong, the game isn't a total waste of time, it just won't hold your attention for long. Rush Hour makes an OK rental, but I'd think twice before I added it to my permanent collection.



Alex

THE BOTTOM LINE

PS EXTREME

76%

COMPATIBILITY

1 or 2 Players

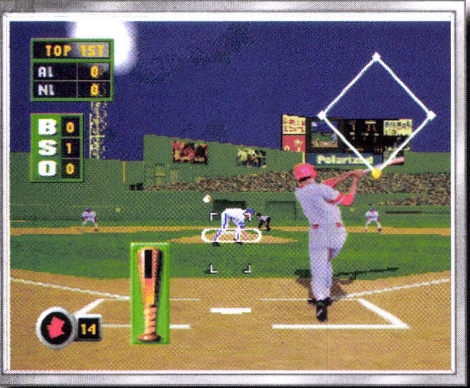
Analog Joystick Compatible

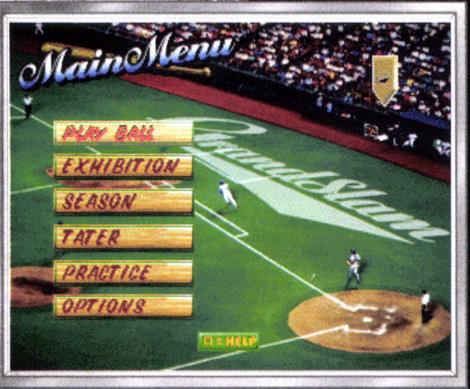
Well, after a considerable amount of time with the game, I've pretty much come to the conclusion that I've been here and done this many times before. There just aren't any elements of this game that I haven't experienced multiple times in the past. Don't get me wrong, the game isn't a total waste of time, it just won't hold your attention for long. Rush Hour makes an OK rental, but I'd think twice before I added it to my permanent collection.

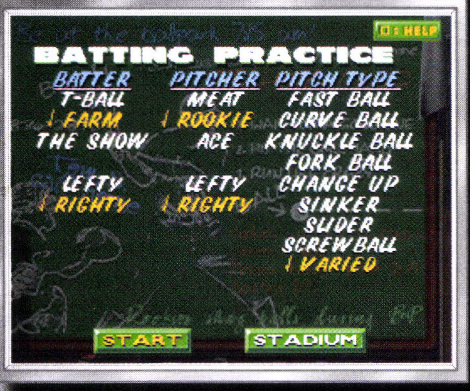
BRONZE X

GRAND SLAM BASEBALL

PUBLISHED BY VIRGIN — DEVELOPED BY BURST

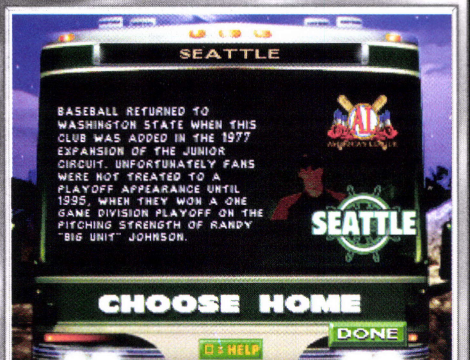






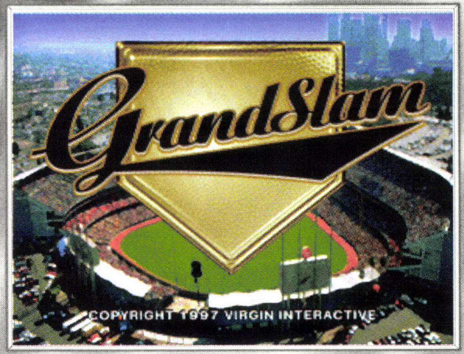
BATTING PRACTICE

BATTER	PITCHER	PITCH TYPE
T-BALL	MEAT	FAST BALL
✓ FARM	✓ ROOKIE	CURVE BALL
THE SHOW	ACE	KNUCKLE BALL
		FORK BALL
LEFTY	LEFTY	CHANGE UP
✓ RIGHTY	✓ RIGHTY	SINKER
		SLIDER
		SCREWBALL
		✓ VARIED

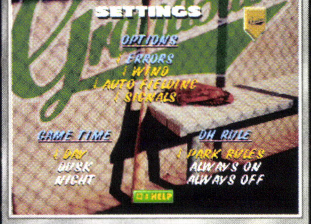


SEATTLE

BASEBALL RETURNED TO WASHINGTON STATE WHEN THIS CLUB WAS ADDED IN THE 1977 EXPANSION OF THE JUNIOR CIRCUIT. UNFORTUNATELY FANS WERE NOT TREATED TO A PLAYOFF APPEARANCE UNTIL 1995, WHEN THEY WON A ONE GAME DIVISION PLAYOFF ON THE PITCHING STRENGTH OF RANDY "BIG UNIT" JOHNSON.



As you may or may not recall from last month's preview section, there were THREE new baseball titles featured, along with a complete review of Interplay's VR Baseball '97. I remind you of this not for grins, but as a precursor to what Virgin has lined up against them, in terms of competition. In addition to the highly regarded Interplay title, Electronic Arts new game, Triple Play '98, (which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue) is currently available, and publishers like Konami (Bottom of the 9th '97), Accolade (Hardball 6), and Acclaim (All-Star Baseball '97 Featuring Frank Thomas) are all set to release their titles within the next month or two, as well. That's a total of six baseball games, without even mentioning the possibility of Sony, Mindscape, or Crystal Dynamics coming out with their baseball sequels! Dude — that's out of control. Almost ten games of one type coming out during the course of a year, all vying for your (baseball) gaming dollar. To sum it up — that's some serious competition and if you're going to make a game that gets purchased, you're going to have to come up with something that gets you noticed. Well, as I was taught to do, a few years ago by a nice professor, who was Ken O'Brien's (UC Davis/NY Jets) sister (and I imagin she still is), I've created a nice transitional sentence.



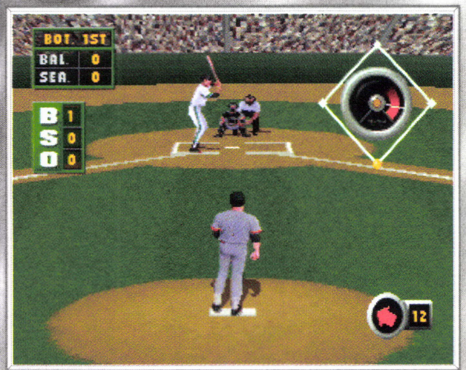
SETTINGS

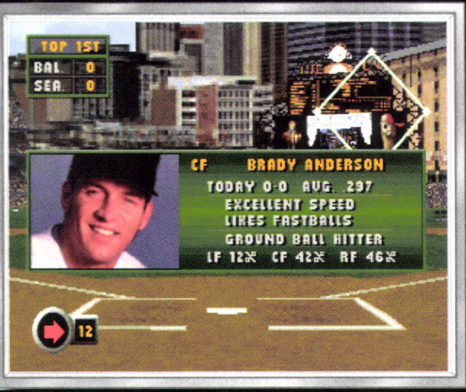
OPTIONS
✓ ERRORS
✓ WIND
✓ AUTO FIELDING
✓ SIGNALS

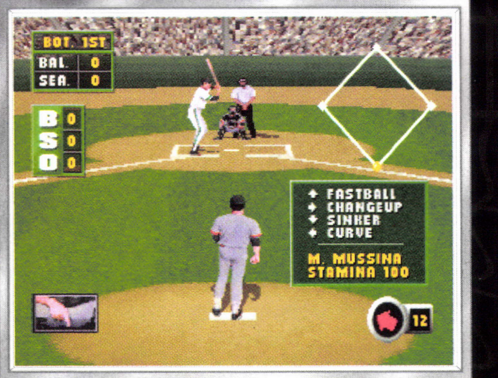
GAME TIME
✓ DAY
DUSK
NIGHT

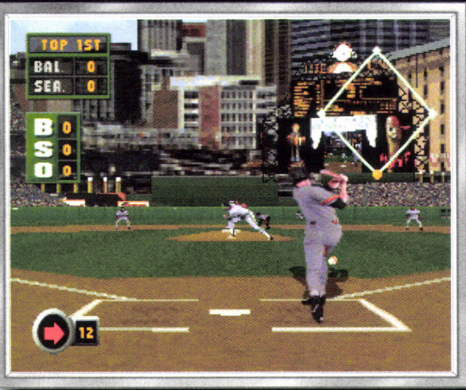
DH RULE
✓ PARK RULES
ALWAYS ON
ALWAYS OFF

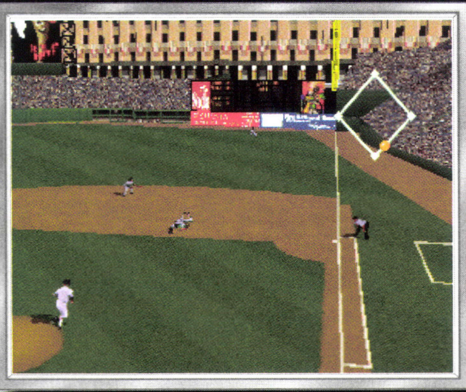
What will you NOTICE, or glean from the screen shots of Grand Slan Baseball? Well, if you're a true basebal fan, you more than likel did a double take when yo first saw that pitchin meter in the upper righ hand corner, and agai when you saw the powe meter icon down in the mi left of the screen. Thos are a couple of features no previously seen in a baseball simulation before but, rather, i something like golf. I thought the pitching meter worked well for both spee and accuracy, as the feedback of wher the ball is headed is immediate. That' not to say that if you don't hit the accuracy area (green part) you won't thro a strike, but your chances become quit slim. There are three skill levels i Grand Slam that effect the pitching accuracy area, from wide angle ("meat") t pinhead thin ("ace"). Forget tryin to be an "ace", as the area is so ridiculously small, that even those of you wit rapid fire fingers will find little succes at hitting the target. So stick with "rookie", the middle difficulty setting, and le 'er rip. As far as hitting is concerned the power meter is only employed o the highest batting difficulty setting named "The Show." If you want mor

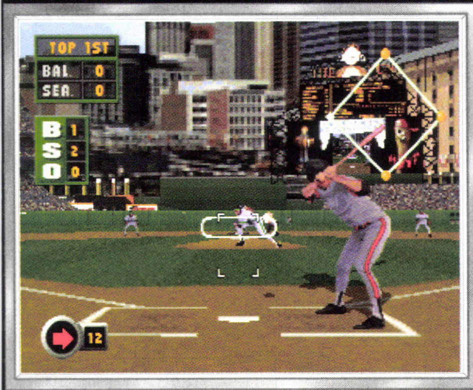








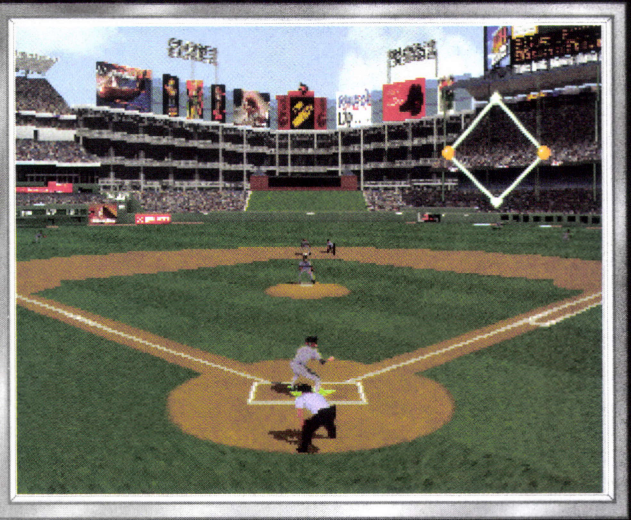




frustration than fun, then check this setting out. I've never been particularly fond of the medium difficulty icon either, the "horse track" shaped oval. Just let me swing and hit the D-pad for my location, thank you very much. I guess this would be the "farm" level, although you don't have to use the D-pad, just swiiiinngg, batter! One last icon you may have noticed is the "catcher giving the sign" display. This can be toggled on or off in the options menu and, when used, can help you with pitch selection as well as location.

Well, that pretty much sums up the things that you HAVEN'T seen in a baseball simulation. Unfortunately, everything else in Grand Slam smacks of 16-bit, ranging from the limited camera angles (one for pitcher/batter, two for fielding) to the sprite based characters, to the less than stellar detail on the stadiums. The players don't have numbers or names on the backs of their jerseys, and there is no Major League Baseball license, only a player's license. When fielding, the computer picks the "closest" player to the ball, and there is no override button for the numerous occasions when the computer is incorrect. Home runs are not real rewarding, and heck, you don't even get to see your guy trot around the bases — you're forced to look at the Jumbotron and watch one of those "outta here" cartoons. All the players seem to have the same skin tone, and for being a sprite based game, there isn't much of a variety on batting stances, maybe three or four.

Grand Slam Baseball ultimately leaves you with the feeling that you've played this game before. The addition of the pitching meter is a nice feature, certainly had it been applied to a first generation baseball game, but with the technology, detail, complete licensing, and overall polish that can be found in the newer baseball titles from Konami, Interplay and EA, Virgin would have been better suited going after a quicker and more arcade-like style of gameplay (current game time averages 44 minutes; VR '97 about 48, TP 98 about 54). With all the competition there is in the baseball arena, you have to carve a niche for yourself as either the arcade leader, the simulation leader, or the futuristic concept (Super Baseball 2020) leader. Unfortunately, Grand Slam can claim none of the above.



Eric

PS EXTREME THE BOTTOM LINE

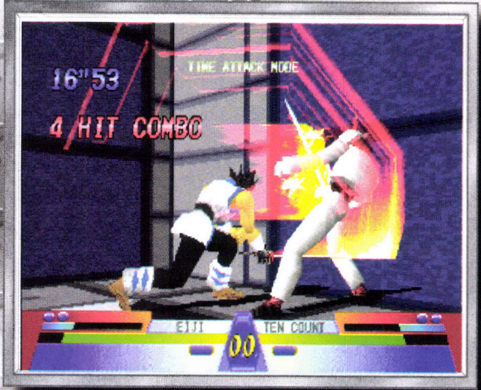
77%

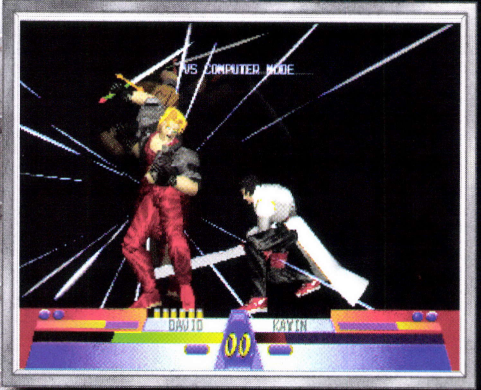
COMPATIBILITY

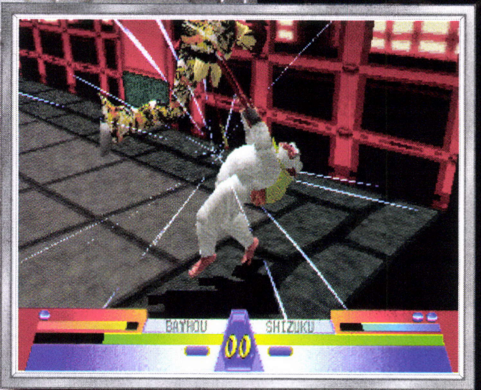
1or 2 Players

Virgin would have been better suited going after a quicker and more arcade-like style of game play (current game time averages 44 minutes; VR '97 about 48 TP 98 about 54). With all the competition there is in the baseball arena, you have to carve a niche for yourself as either the arcade leader, the simulation leader, or the futuristic concept (Super Baseball 2020) leader. Unfortunately, Grand Slam can claim none of the above.

BRONZE X





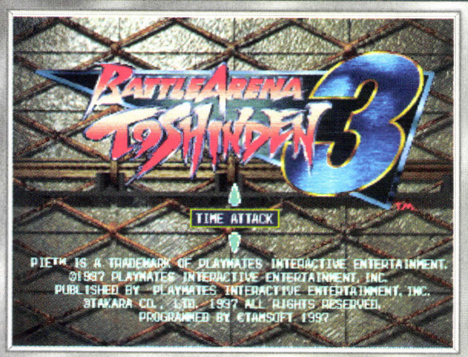


BATTLE ARENA TOSHINDEN 3

PUBLISHED BY PLAYMATES — DEVELOPED BY TAKARA/TAMSOFT

I remember reviewing the original Battle Arena Toshinden (which I shall whimsically abbreviate as BAT from here on) about a year and a half ago, when it came out at roughly the same time as Tekken. Both games were a lot of fun, and showed off the PlayStation's graphical abilities (which are as impressive now as they were then), but Tekken had a little extra oomph — more playability, cooler characters. Tekken got the Gold X, while BAT only earned a Silver. When the sequels shipped in '96, it was no contest. BAT 2 was arguably a step DOWN from the original, while Tekken 2 became an instant classic, and is still one of the best 3D fighters ever made. BAT 3 manages to regain a little respect for the series, but it's still a distant second to another Namco fighter — this time around, the brilliant Soul Blade.

BAT 3 certainly goes overboard with the number of playable characters: there are 32 in all, with 12 from the first two games (the Ryu clone Eiji, the green-haired Ellis and the whip-wielding Sofia, about whom I still have fantasies, to name three) and a whopping 20 newbies. At the start of the game, you can choose from 14 characters; the other 18 are "hidden" or "bonus" characters, which means you have to earn them by playing through the game in a variety of ways. They sure are a unique bunch; one guy is a gun-toting assassin, another is a clone of Michael Jackson from Moonwalker, and yet another sports a hockey mask and swings around a chainsaw.



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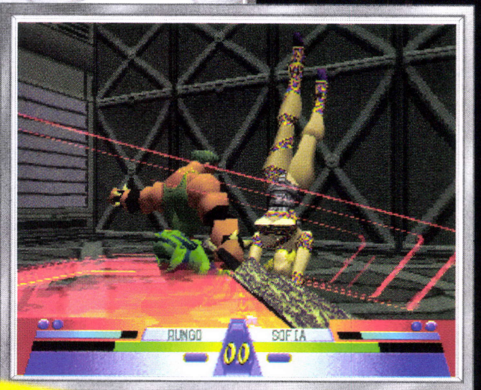
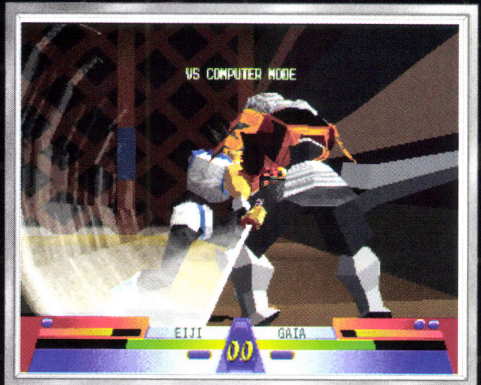
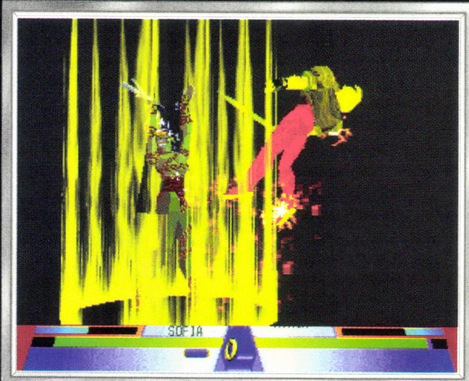
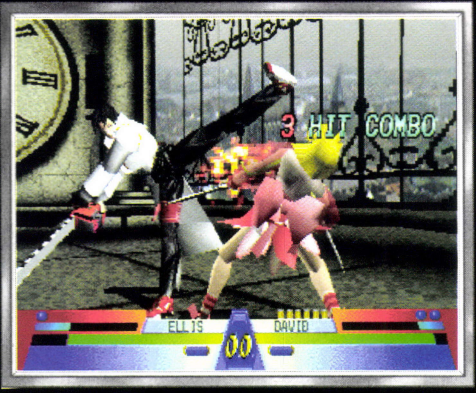
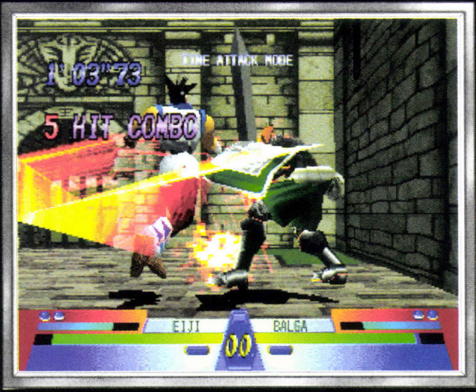
The game design has been considerably tweaked. In the biggest change, all the arenas are now enclosed "cages" in which the fighters bounce off the walls and ceiling to attack or to escape. It becomes quite claustrophobic after a while. Unfortunately, the cages themselves aren't that cool, and the backgrounds outside the cages are very noticeably 2D. If you switch the game from 30 FPS to 60 FPS — the first time I've seen this option in a fighting game — the

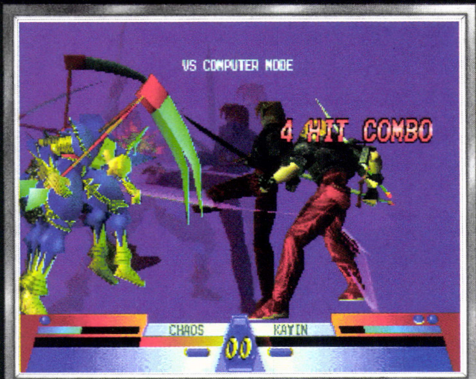


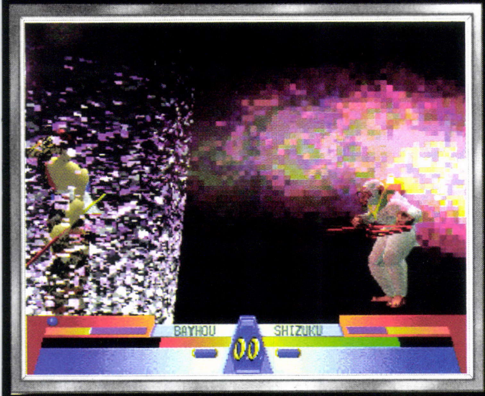


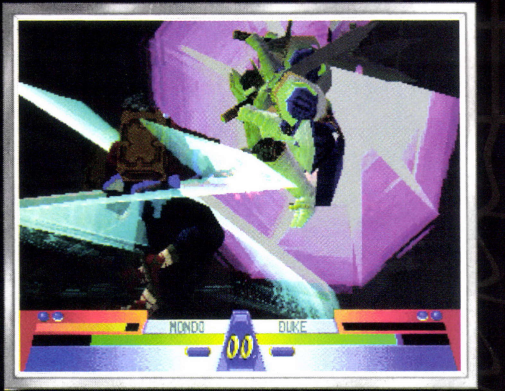


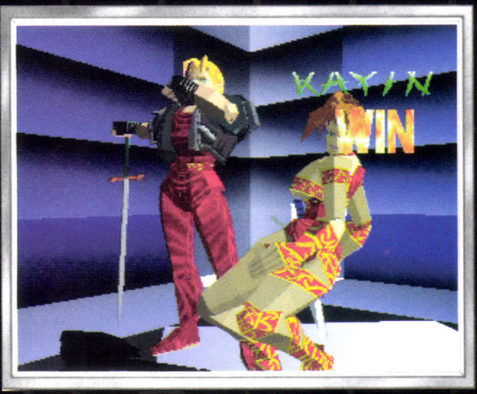








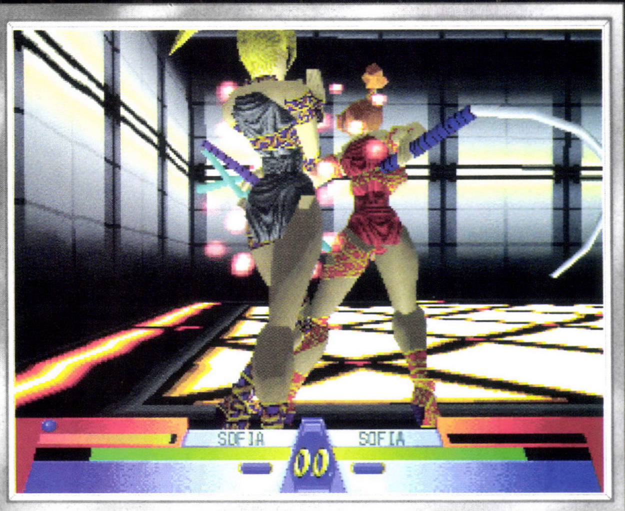




cages lose their textures and the backgrounds are dropped entirely, for one of the ugliest fighting-game experiences since Yie Ar Kung Fu. The U.S. version has two fighting modes not found in the Japanese version: a Practice Mode, where you can clean up your sloppy technique, and Survival Mode, where you see how long you can survive with a single life bar.

Graphically, Toshinden 3 is no big shakes. The roughly drawn character portraits look like 16-bit creations. At 30 or 60 FPS, the animation is somewhat stilted and a tad awkward. The screen annoyingly goes black whenever a character does a graphically spectacular special move — which I think is more to keep the game from slowing down than to emphasize the move. Combos are riddled with rhythm-breaking pauses as each hit lands. It's very similar to Acclaim's Batman Forever, in that you find yourself smashing all these buttons and there's all this stuff happening on the screen, but you're not really sure why. The sound effects are also lacking — why, for example, isn't there a buzzing noise during a match with the chainsaw guy? Why, when two sword-users are battling, does a block sound like a dull thud instead of a steel-on-steel clang? Lastly, the light-jazz background music is light-years from being good.

BAT 3 is decent fun, and the huge roster of characters might make it appeal to certain fighting-game fans, but there's absolutely nothing here to make me recommend this game over the twin towers of Tekken 2 and Soul Blade. Namco has set incredibly high standards in PlayStation fighting games, and anyone who enters the field has to match those standards. BAT 3 simply doesn't.



Zach

PS EXTREME THE BOTTOM LINE

82%

COMPATIBILITY

1or 2 Players

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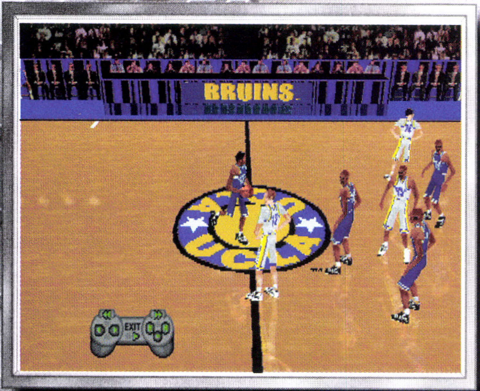
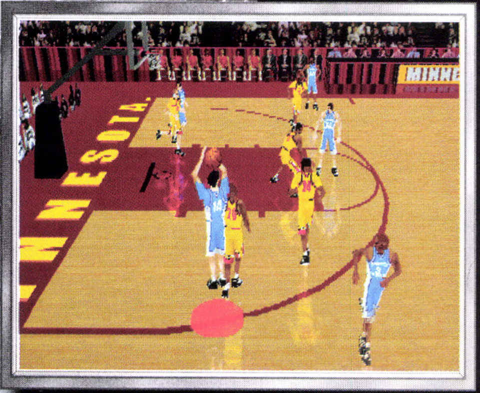
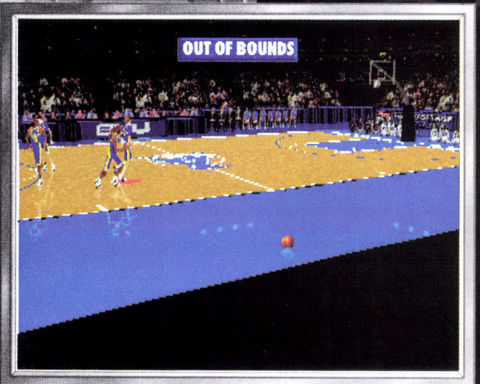
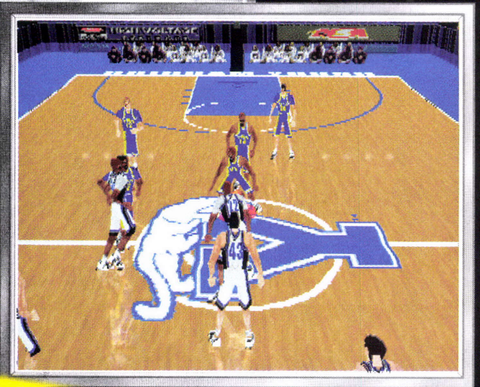
SILVER X









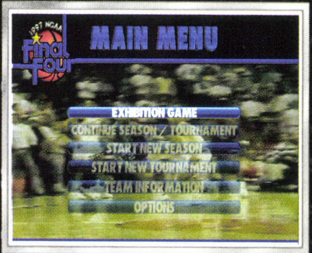
NCAA FINAL FOUR

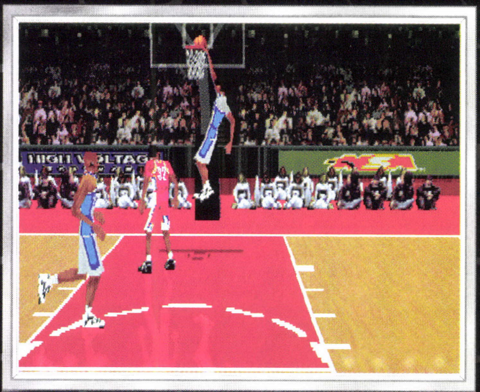
PUBLISHED BY MINDSCAPE — DEVELOPED BY HIGH VOLTAGE

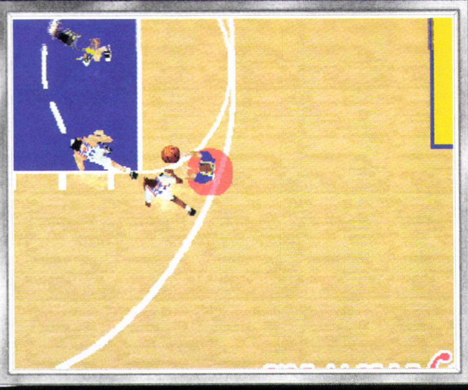
1997 NCAA
Final Four
Indianapolis

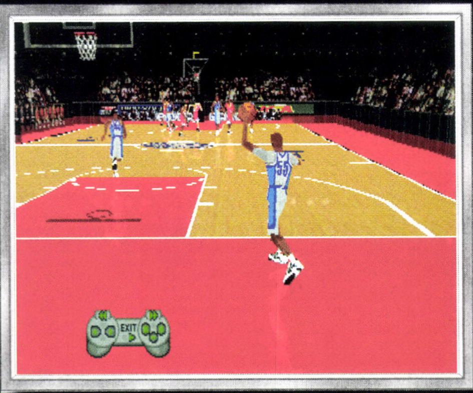
What the heck is this? How did Sony let this thing get through their quality control system? NCAA Final Four from Mindscape is undoubtedly the worst basketball "simulation" I've ever played — and I've played virtually every one ever created for any system or computer. This game is so bad, I feel sorry for those of you that have already purchased it from a store that won't take returns. Mindscape had NCAA Final Four released to market when the tournament had already begun in mid-March, and we received our review version shortly thereafter. Obviously, Mindscape was aware of two things: The first being that, in order to generate any sales of this game, they would need to capitalize on the hype that surrounds March Madness; and secondly, in order to generate any sales of this game, they would need to capitalize on an unsuspecting public and ship the finished product to retailers before the objective press could spend any time playing it. Ok, so I've given away the ending, but take a look and see why I came to the conclusion that I did.

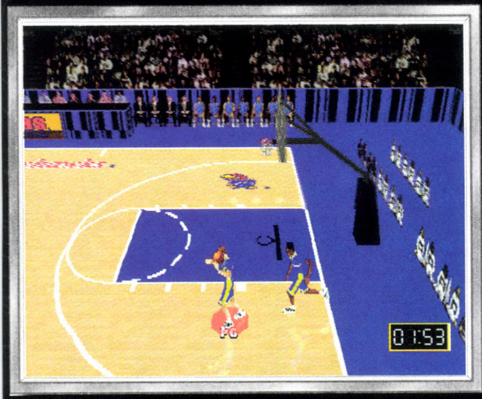
Where to start, oh where to start. Let's try the completely inane play mechanics and the "no rhyme or reason" for any of the AI routines. Why did I just make that three pointer? I released the ball almost at the time my feet hit the ground. Why did I just make another three pointer? This time I released the ball as soon as I could. Why did I just shoot an airball? I released the ball as soon as I could. You can see where this story is going and it is just one of a plethora of sloppy control issues. How about stealing the ball? Your polygon player painstakingly reaches out to swipe at the ball, much like an old guy bending over to pull up his socks; the only way you're going to get that ball is if you "intercept" (as the announcer says) one of the gajillion one handed football type throws that both you (uncontrollably) and the computer (who knows why) attempt. These type of passes get picked-off about twenty percent of the time and do so by no means of your own. It just happens. Here's one of my favorite moments in NCAA Final Four: The computer scores, and then you hold the ball and get called for a five second violation. Your guy holding the ball then does one of the aforementioned football (or baseball, if you prefer) throws, all the way down to the other end of the court, to one of the computer players (who is programmed to always inbound the ball), who then slowly jogs back down to the spot from where you just threw it.

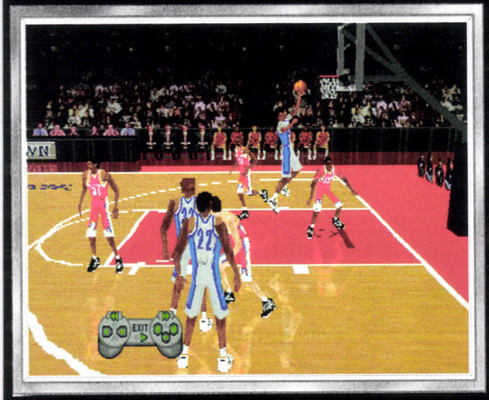


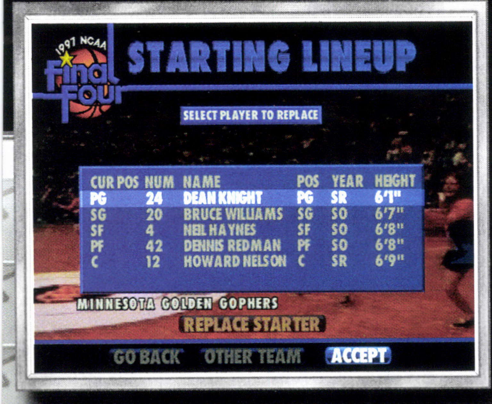










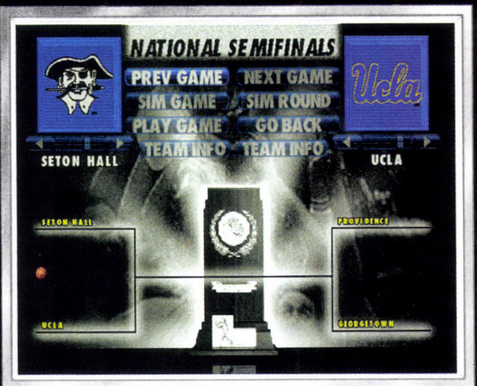


STARTING LINEUP

SELECT PLAYER TO REPLACE

CUR POS	NUM	NAME	POS	YEAR	HEIGHT
PG	24	DEAN KNIGHT	PG	SR	6'1"
SG	20	BRUCE WILLIAMS	SG	SO	6'7"
SF	4	NEIL HAYNES	SF	SO	6'8"
PF	42	DENNIS REDMAN	PF	SO	6'8"
C	12	HOWARD NELSON	C	SR	6'9"

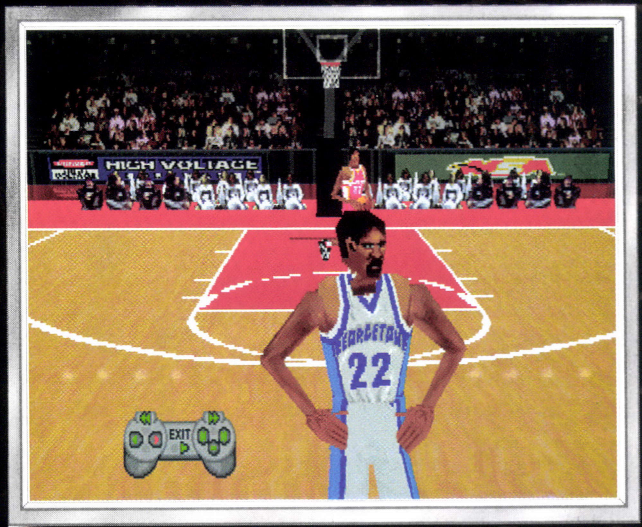
MINNESOTA GOLDEN GOPHERS



That's a fun sequence of events to watch.

Let's talk motion captured animations, shall we? I don't know who Mindcape used for their animations, but I have a clue. By the mere fact that most of the time the players jump about three inches off of the ground, and that the layups look like they're taking place two and a half feet below the rim, I venture to say that High Voltage used some of their own programmers for the motion capture. The majority of the time, the layups appear to be going through the BOTTOM of the hoop, like someone's trying to jam the ball up the net. There's also an abundance of little hook shots, again, that look like they're done by someone who's never been above the rim. And what about dunks, you say? Please, if I've ever seen less inspiring slams, it was watching my brother in law and his friends try to jam on the nine-foot rims down at the elementary school. Which, by the way, is probably where the dunks were motion captured, because they have that same "little guy dunking on short rims" look about them. Pathetic. Oh, and as I'm want to do, I've saved the best for last. Sound effects. I don't know what these people were thinking, but the sound you get when catching a pass is that of a RUBBER basketball. You know, that unmistakable "Thoink" that you hear with the $10 basketballs that the eight year olds use. Wow. And the sound of a dunk? Geez, High Voltage apparently had their little programmers dunking on one of those adjustable, portable hoops you get at Toys 'R' Us, the kind with the pseudo break-away rim. The "clang" of a dunk in NCAA Final Four is attune to the sound you get when the cheap little spring snaps back. High tech, indeed.

So, Mindscape comes out with another crappy product for the Playstation — big deal, just don't go near it. But, you know, it is a big deal, because all of us, and in particular you, as consumers, don't need to have the market filled with waste like this. It just makes consumers a little more hesitant to plunk down $50 Georges next time they go into the retail store. And if the supply is great, and the demand is low, we don't need to look too far back into history to see what will happen. That's the end of my editorial blurb, I've got to go wash my hands.



Eric

PS EXTREME

THE BOTTOM LINE

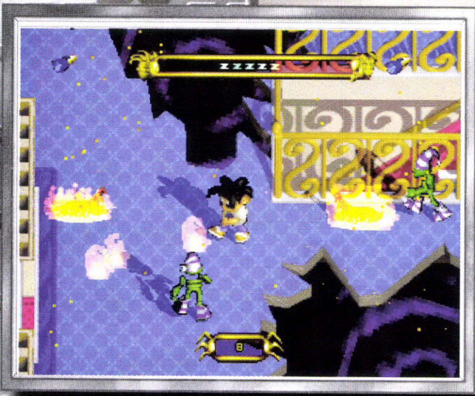
22%

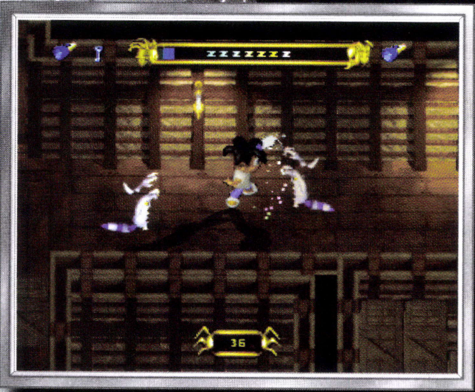
COMPATIBILITY

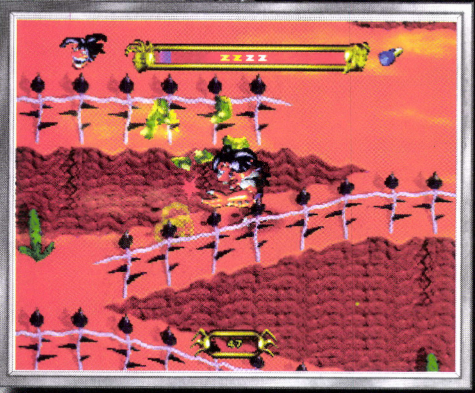
1 or 2 Players

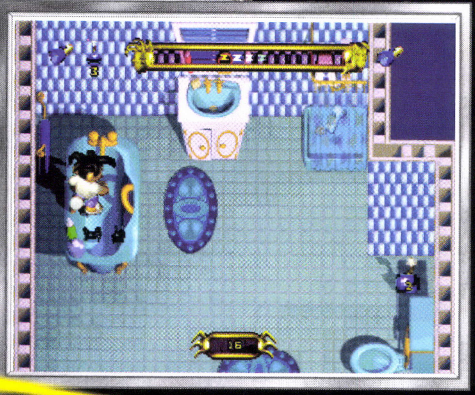
Multi Tap Adaptable 1-8 Players

So, Mindscape comes out with another crappy product for the Playstation — big deal, just don't go near it. But you know, it is a big deal, because all of us, and in particular you, as consumers, don't need to have the market filled with waste like this. It just makes consumers a little more hesitant to plunk down $50 Georges next time they go into the retail store. And if the supply is great, and the demand is low, we don't need to look too far back into history to see what will happen. That's the end of my editorial blurb, I've got to go wash my hands.









SWAGMAN

PUBLISHED BY EIDOS — DEVELOPED BY CORE

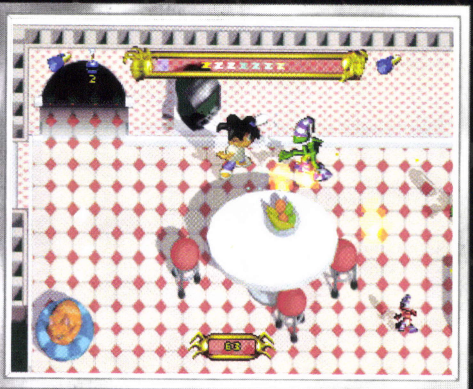
Eidos and Core are about to release their first title since last November's introduction of Lara Croft and the blockbuster hit, Tomb Raider. Swagman is a complete departure form their first-person action/adventure, both graphically and in terms of gameplay, but the game has its own style and is a compelling, Zelda-esque experience — let's get crackin'!

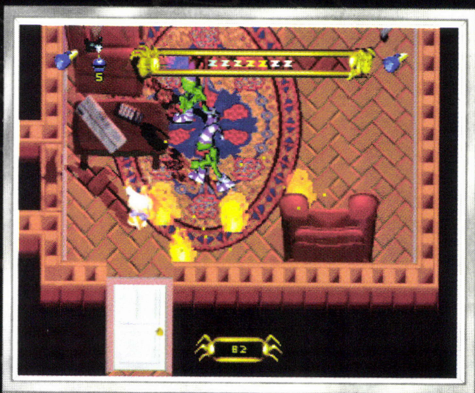
Swagman presents the player with a top-down/tilted isometric perspective of the action — very colorful and detailed, with a distinct animation style, and more than a little reminiscent of The Legend of Zelda series. But, where 16-bit technology left off, Core begins. The game makes use of an impressive array of colors and a number of polygon and sprite-based graphic tricks that give a three-dimensional quality to the proceedings. It is safe to say that there is no other game on the PlayStation that presents a graphic style quite like that of Swagman.

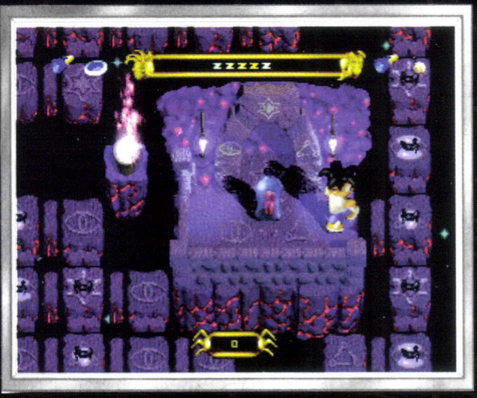
Because of the bright colors used in the game, and the cartoon-style main character (Zach) and enemies, the game looks like a kid's game, but don't be fooled. Like Zelda, you figure out a number of brain twisters as you move through the game, all the while making use of your running and attack skills. The story begins with your sister locked in a bird cage in your room, when the Scarab comes to life and begins telling you about the Swagman. It seems that the Swagman exists in your dreams and you must defeat he and his minions before you wake up.

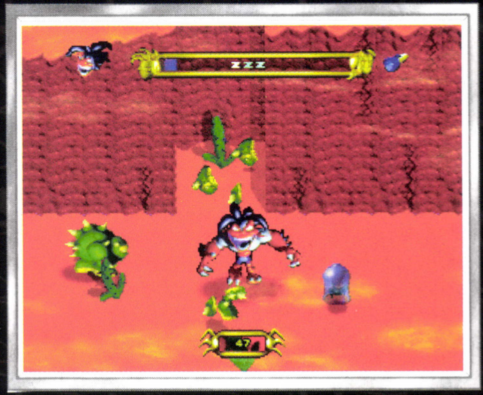
SwagMan
Press Start
CORE
EIDOS

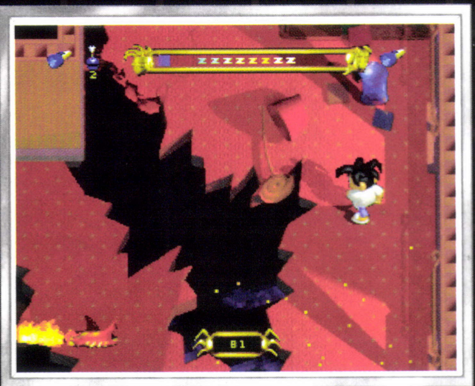
The first order of business is coming to grips with exactly what you need to do here. You begin with no weapon, but the Scarab, telling you that the Swagman cometh, leaves a flashlight behind that serves as a weapon. In this first room is a key that you must acquire from under glass (using the flashlight) in order to open the door to the next room. In this next room, you discover some bombs (very important), collect your spiders that are running loose (the collection object of choice in Swagman) and locate the game's first enemies and doors to other rooms and more keys. You also get more information from the Scarab, who tells you something about Mirrors "knitting your world with these twisted, bad-dream landscapes" — okie, dokie. From here, you must drop a bomb on the bed in the nightmare's room (he can't be killed) , without being crushed by the bed, drop another bomb at the door, and make your

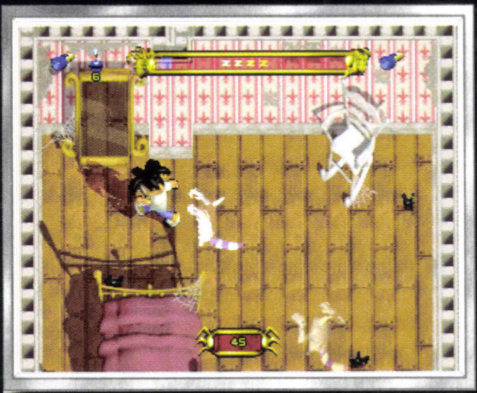


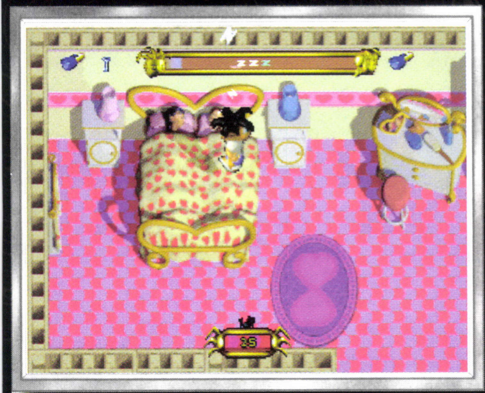


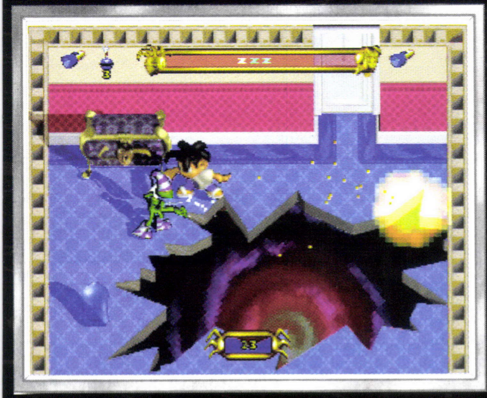


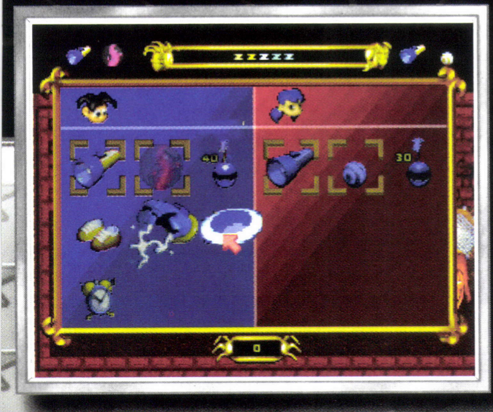


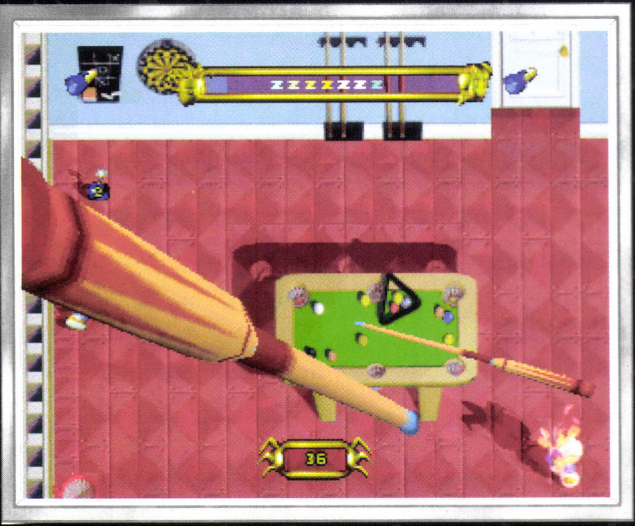












way into your parents' room. So, you can see how the story goes. There is a lot of trial-and-error in Swagman, and many tricky scenarios. You will find yourself dying (waking up) many times, then using your continues to try make your way through the adventure — unless you happen upon a 'z' power-up along the way to recharge your dream energy. Once you have made it through the first part of Zach's house (by following the Scarab's advise and getting access to a mirror that you walk through), you will find yourself in the Pumpskin Patch, with an alter(ed)-ego. You are now this demonic looking dude (the DreamBeast) with a slash attack and headbutt move, and the ability to breathe fire. You have entered the DreamWorld. In all, there are 16 levels in the game, in both the RealWorld and the DreamWorld, a number of different enemies and bosses, special items and power-ups. And many puzzles to solve. The game is also played from the viewpoint of both Zach and his sister (she becomes available once you have released her from the cage) — and two players can play, as well.

In the end, Swagman is a fairly unique, solid piece of entertainment. While it is not as long or involving as the Zelda series, it is the best example of this type of game on the PlayStation — outclassing the other titles in the genre. The game is beautifully drawn, has a soundtrack that enhances the dream-like quality of the game, and has a tight design. Don't be put off by the cartoon-style graphics and the fact that you are playing the role(s) of children. While the look of the game, and its theme, instantly reminded me of the Little Nemo stories (and, of course, the classic Genesis song, "Scenes From a Night's Dream") there's a lot of good gameplay here, and one of the more original challenges on the PlayStation.

Dave

THE BOTTOM LINE

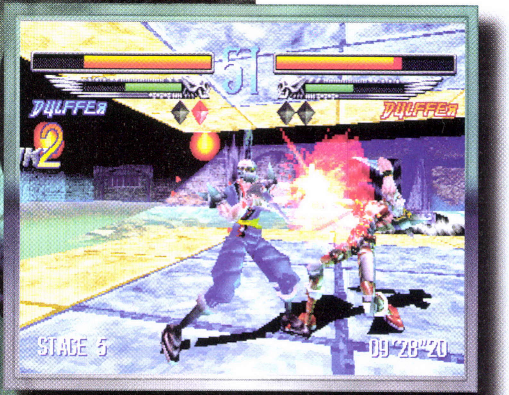
PS EXTREME 88%

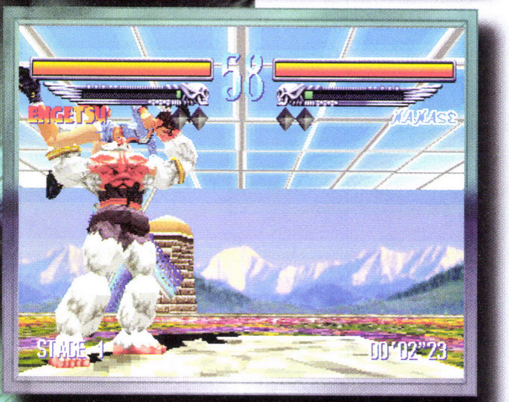
COMPATIBILITY

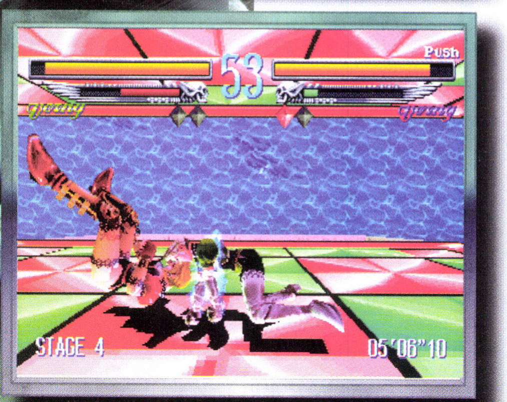
1 Player

The game is beautifully drawn, has a soundtrack that enhances the dream-like quality of the game, and has a tight design. Don't be put off by the cartoon-style graphics and the fact that you are playing the role(s) of children. While the look of the game, and its theme, instantly reminded me of the Little Nemo stories (and, of course, the classic Genesis song, "Scenes From a Night's Dream") there's a lot of good gameplay here, and one of the more original challenges on the PlayStation.

SILVER X


51
DYLFFER
DYLFFER
2
STAGE 5
09'28"20

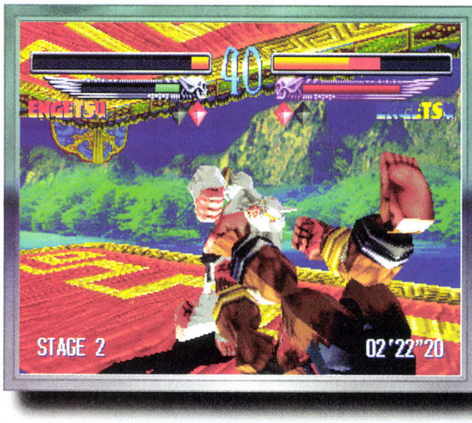

58
ENGETSU
MAKASE
STAGE 1
00'02"23

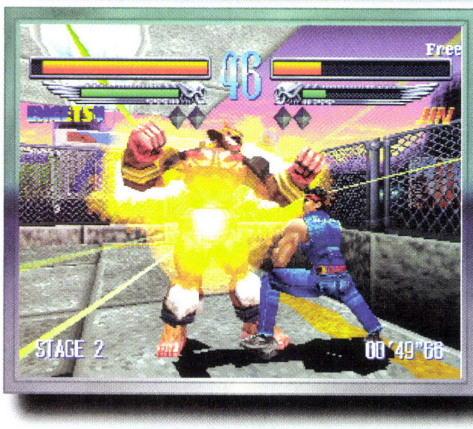

53
Push
STAGE 4
05'06"10

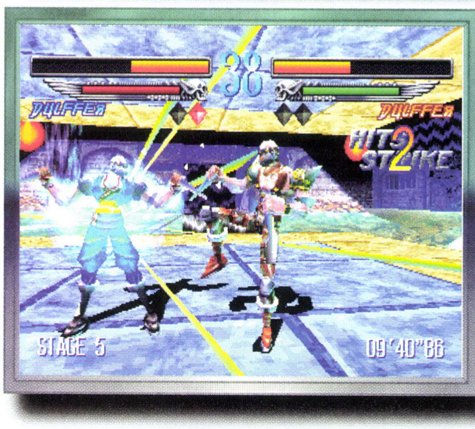
HEAVEN'S GATE

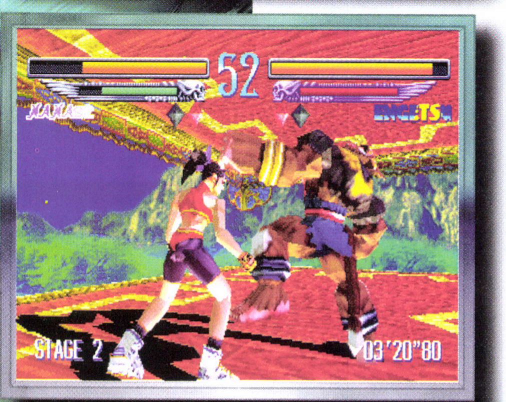
ATLUS • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Other than driving games, 3D one-on-one fighters probably make up the biggest percentage of titles for the PlayStation library. And, if you think there's a lot of fighting games available over here, just check out the import scene to be completely blown away, as there are literally hundreds of them available in Japan — and a lot of them are complete stinkers. So, it comes to no surprise to find out that Atlus has their own 3D fighter currently out in Japan (with a good chance of release in the States) titled Heaven's Gate (good chance of a name change here, thanks to those vodka-swilling trekkies). Although you'll be hard-pressed to find anything truly new or revolutionary about it, Heaven's Gate is actually a good, if not great, fighter that comes packed with the usual options, moves, characters and modes that we've become accustomed to. As in Tekken and Soul Blade, Heaven's has an arcade option, a training mode and a "Tough-Guy" mode, which is comparable to the standard endurance mode. There is the ability to customize the arenas for ring outs or surrounding walls, in addition to an ever-present ceiling which sets up some pretty cool upward body slams. Of course, the the game sports plenty of special moves, as well as juggles and multiple-hit combos, and there is also an additional energy bar, like that of the super bar in the Street Fighter series, which allows you to pull off desperation moves or "supers" at key points during each battle. The graphics are very colorful and detailed, with some of the characters sporting hundreds of polygons. Well, there you have it. We should have more info on the fate of Heaven's Gate in America as it becomes available.


40
ENGETSU
ENGETSU
STAGE 2
02'22"20


46
Free
ENGETSU
STAGE 2
00'49"66


38
DYLFFER
DYLFFER
HIT 2 STRIKE
STAGE 5
09'40"66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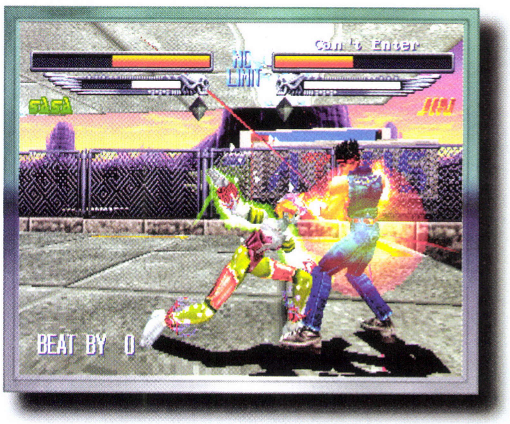
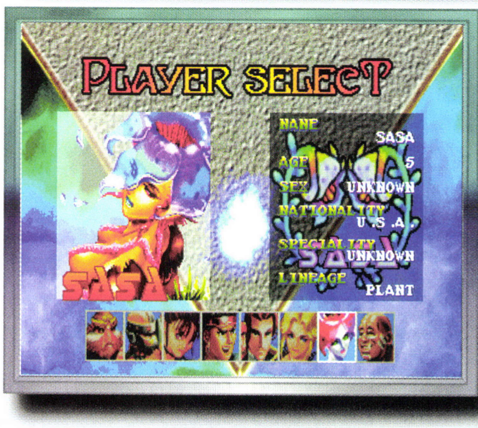
MAKASE
ENGETSU
STAGE 2
03'20"80


NO LIMIT
Can't Enter
SASA
BEAT BY 0

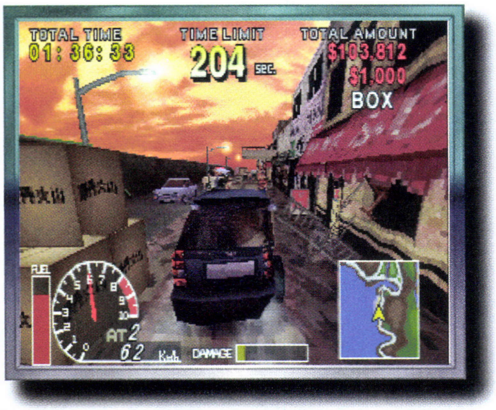

PLAYER SELECT
SASA

NAME SASA
AGE 5
SEX UNKHOWN
NATIONALITY U.S.A
SPECIALITY UNKHOWN
LINEAGE PLANT

EXPORT

RUNABOUT

CLIMAX • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN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01: 36: 33
TIME LIMIT
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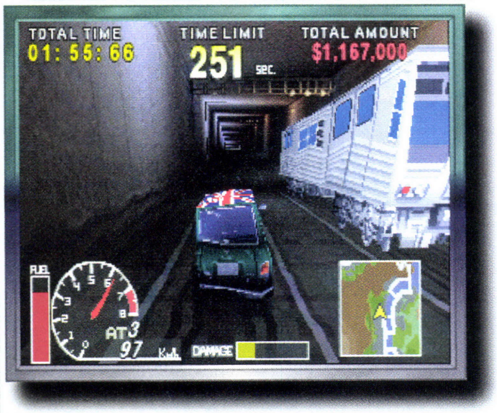
$103,812
$1,000
BOX
AT 2
62
DAMAGE


TOTAL TIME
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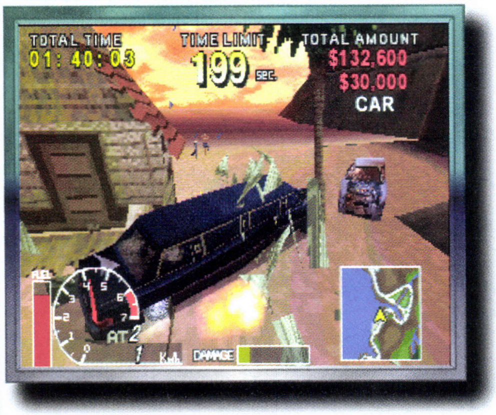
AT 3
97
DAMAGE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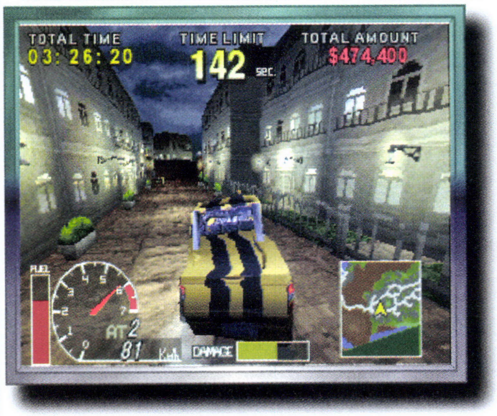
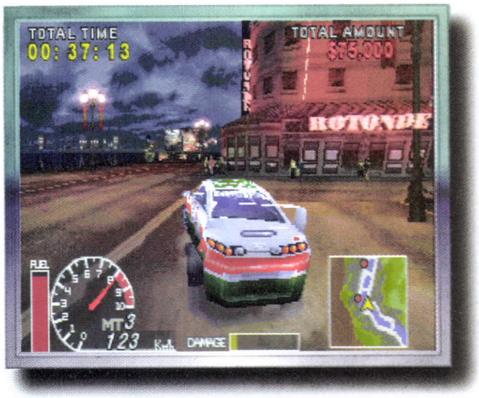
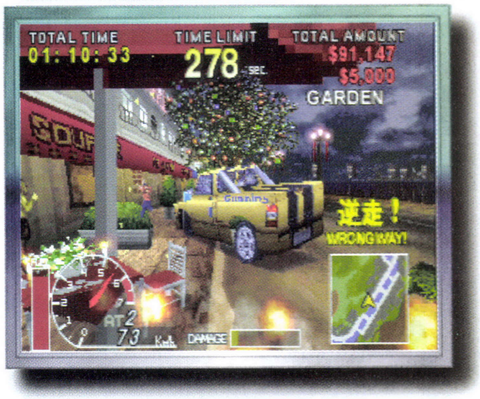
CAR
AT 2
DAMAGE


TOTAL TIME
03: 26: 20
TIME LIMIT
142 sec.
TOTAL AMOUNT
$474,400
AT 2
81
DAMAGE

We know what you're thinking, "Not another PlayStation driving game! Who needs 'em!" Well mama's boy, this ain't your typical driving game. Climax's Runabout is an all-out dash to complete each of the three tracks, as well as the specific goals that you're challenged with, in the allotted amount of time. Ok, you're thinking seen it done it? Not with a total of 22 different vehicles (18 hidden), ranging from a huge SamTrans bus to a Morris Minor Mini. Not with tracks that offer huge, non-linear/go anywhere environments that have a myriad of different routes and shortcuts to discover. Not with a damage meter that assigns the monetary value to everything you destroy or run into along your way to ultimate victory. Not the type of game that lets you run straight through 3D buildings, complete with screaming people ducking for cover, in order to shave off a few necessary seconds. Not with such realistic physics sending your car ten feet in the air, in a fiery ball, when you run into a loaded gas tanker. Not with... well you get the drift. This game is totally cool, with the only real downside being the short-term playability. The three tracks in total can be beaten in less than a half-hour, but this is somewhat combated by figuring out the different ways to uncover the hidden vehicles. It's not just about finishing the race before your time runs out. If you beat certain times with certain cars or cause a certain amount of damage and still finish the race, you will have more and more vehicles at your disposal. We haven't even mentioned the super-fast 3D engine, the drop-dead gorgeous graphics or the rockin' surf tunes. What a package! There is no official word on who will be bringing this game to the American market, but you can bet it's a sure thing!


TOTAL TIME
00: 37: 13
TOTAL AMOUNT
$35,000
ROTONDE
MT 3
123
DAMAGE


TOTAL TIME
01: 10: 33
TIME LIMIT
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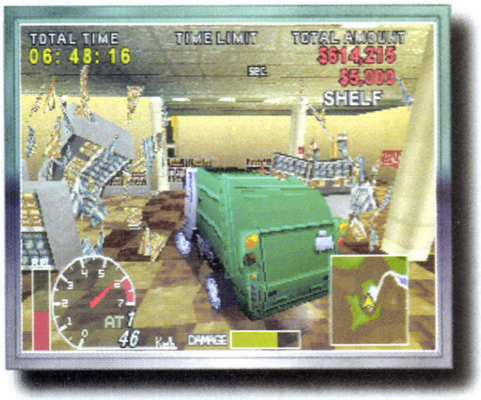
TOTAL AMOUNT
$91,147
$5,300
GARDEN
逆走！
WRONG WAY!
AT 2
73
DAMAGE


TOTAL TIME
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TIME LIMIT
TOTAL AMOUNT
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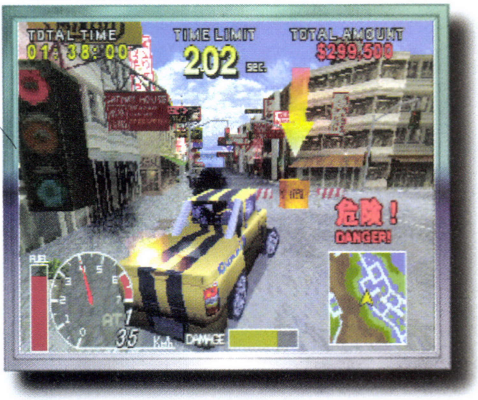
$5,000
SHELF
AT 1
46
DAMAGE


TOTAL TIME
01: 38: 00
TIME LIMIT
202 sec.
TOTAL AMOUNT
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危険！
DANGER!
AT 1
35
DAMAGE

TOTAL TIME
03: 21: 96
TIME LIMIT
099 sec.
TOTAL AMOUNT
$536,122
$10,000
SPORTS CAR
危険！
DANGER!
AT 2
21
DAMAGE

TOTAL TIME
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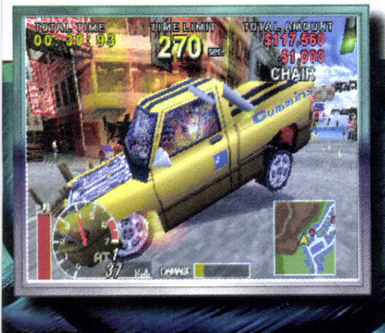
FENCE
123
DAMAGE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TIME LIMIT
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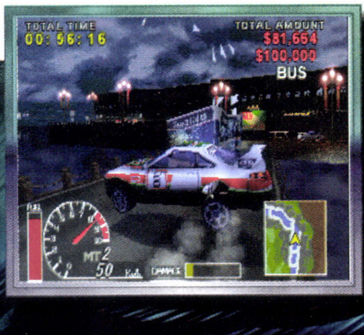
CHAIR
Cummins
AT 1
31
DAMAGE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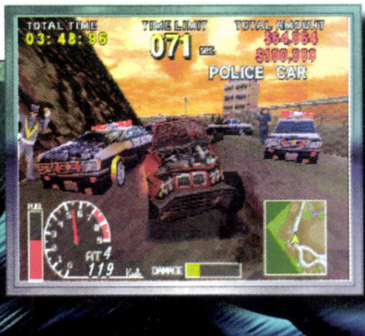
BUS
MT 2
50
DAMAGE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TIME LIMIT
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TOTAL AMOUNT
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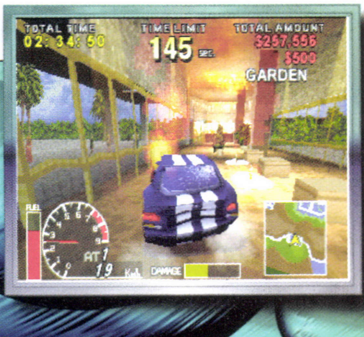
POLICE CAR
AT 4
119
DAMAGE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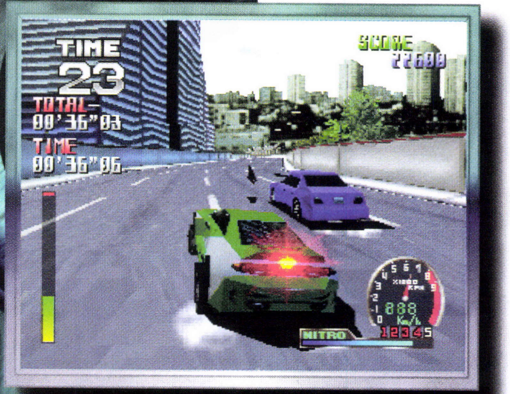
02: 34: 50
TIME LIMIT
145 sec.
TOTAL AMOUNT
$297,556
$500
GARDEN
AT 1
19
DAMAGE

RAY TRACERS

TAITO • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

Taito's Ray Tracers is, in essence, a sequel to their longstanding driving series, Chase HQ. Although, this one's a bit of a departure in that you are no longer a police officer going after wanted criminals. This time, you're searching for a variety of different enemies, ranging from huge mech-like robots to harrier jets. In typical Chase HQ fashion, you drive your car along a twisting track (ranging from congested city streets to underground sewers teeming with hovercraft) in order to reach various checkpoints in the allotted amount of time. The faster you get there, the more time you accumulate in which to do battle with the boss. These battles are fought out by constantly ramming the joe-y until he blows up, although there is a certain amount of strategy to it, as you have a limited supply of nitro which gives you quick turbo boosts. The key is to stockpile your nitro and use it only against the boss, which sometimes isn't possible. If you can't defeat him before your time runs out, it's game over — simple, but fun. Ray Tracers looks very nice although, overall, it's a bit dark. The graphical engine is the, now-typical, 3D polygonal sort, but looks quite polished and runs super-fast when comparing it to some of the current drivers that are available. The downside is the game is six levels short, and can be beaten, pretty much, in one sitting (roughly a half an hour's time). Whether or not this game will be released in the States is unknown at this point but Taito's Ray Storm, featured in last month's EXPort, was picked up by Working Designs, so you never know.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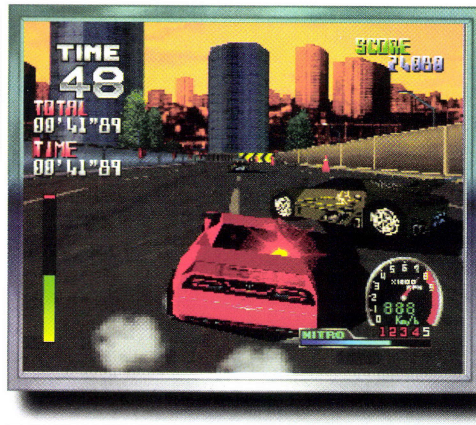
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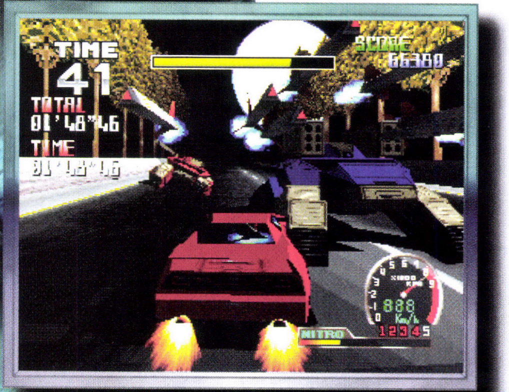
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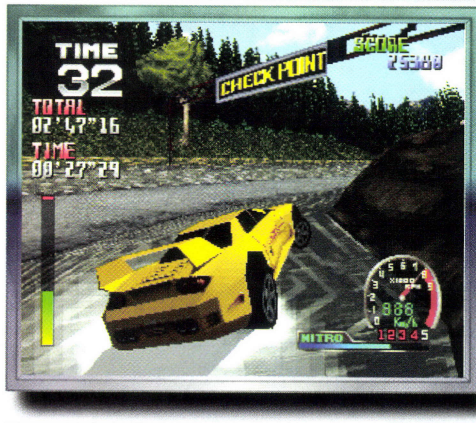
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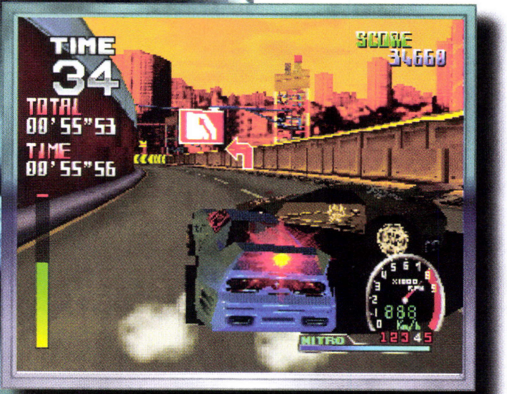
TIME
NITRO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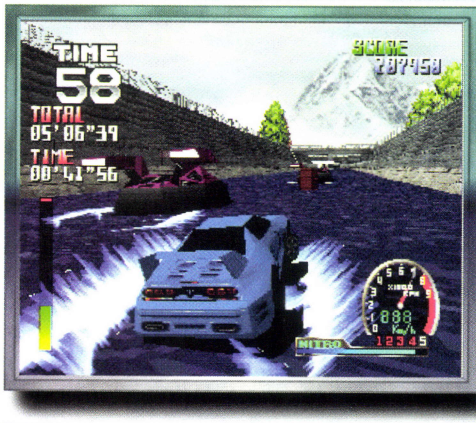
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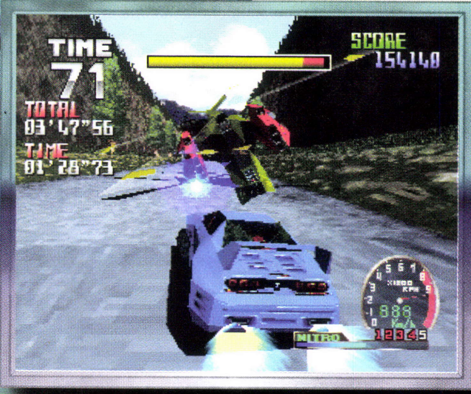
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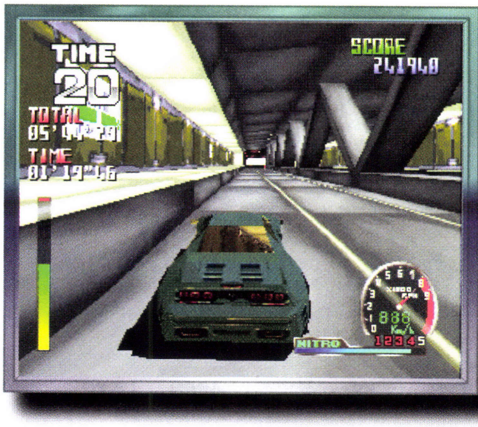
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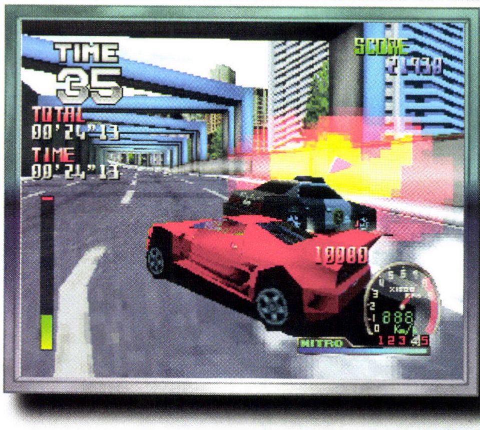
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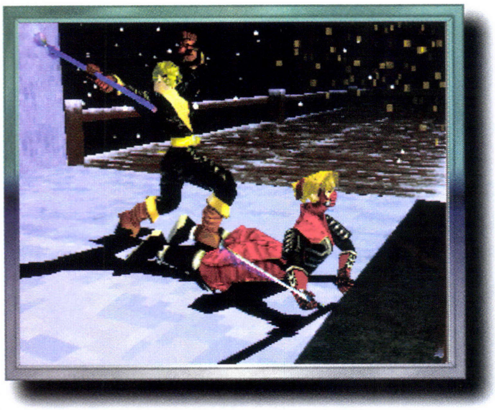
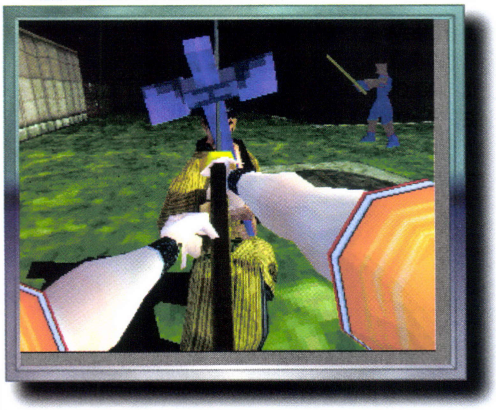
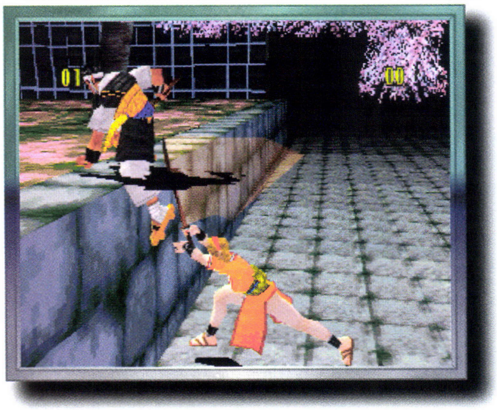
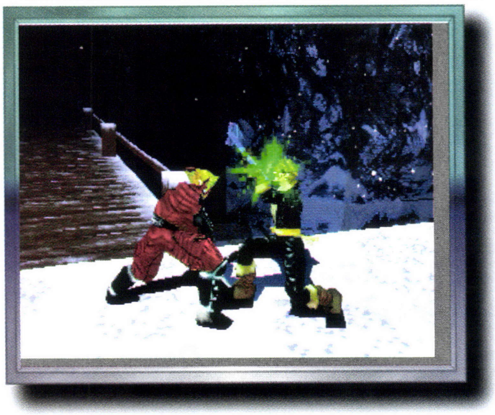
NITRO

EXPORT





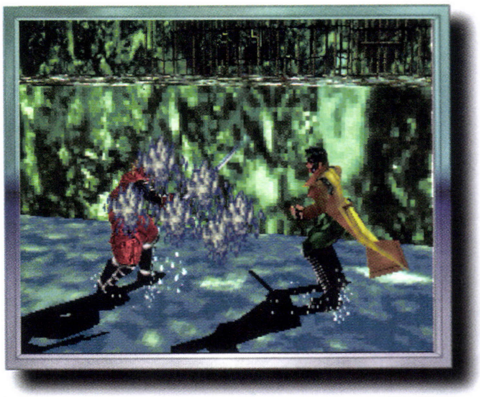


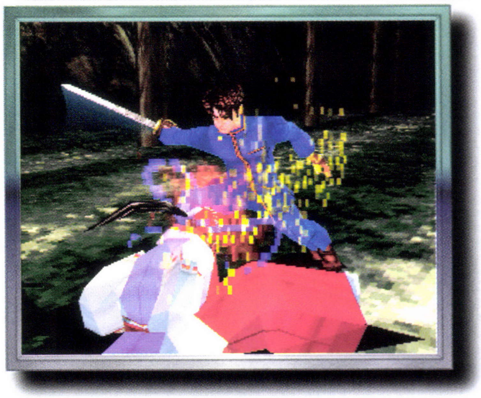


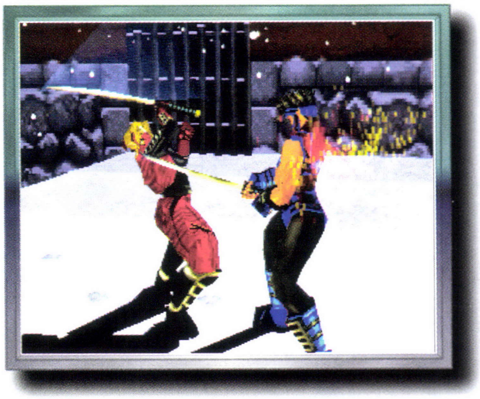
BUSHIDO BLADE

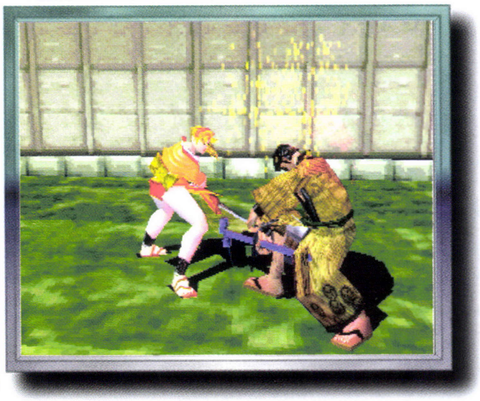
SQUARESOFT • AVAILABLE NOW • JAPAN

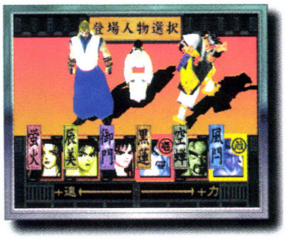
Square's innovative Bushido Blade has just released in Japan and is currently going through the American translation and localization process for release, by Sony of course, sometime this year. At first glance, one might think this game looks like your typical 3D fighting game, albeit with weapons (a la Soul Blade or Dynasty Warriors). Well, if those games are considered fighting games, than Bushido Blade could be considered a fighting simulation, and we mean that in the strictest sense. No longer is the player restricted by health meters or time limits. Wins and losses are determined instantaneously, by severe attacks to critical parts of the body. Take a slash to the head with a huge samurai sword and you ain't gettin' back up any time soon. In this way, battles can be very short in nature and can be won with one critical strike in, literally, one second. But, the depth and complexity of the game brings the experience to a new level. The areas in which you do battle in are also non-standard, in that they are huge 3D environments which allow the player to "turn and run away" from his opponent. The player can also use the environments to his advantage, like throwing dirt into the eyes of his foe, climbing up to a higher level in order to get the upper-hand, or running into a dense bamboo forest to hide and plan his next attack. Although the graphical engine can't compare to that of Tekken or even Tobal in terms of overall finesse, it isn't a detraction. It's the major amount of complex moves available, along with the huge element of strategy that sets this fighter apart from anything that has been released to date.

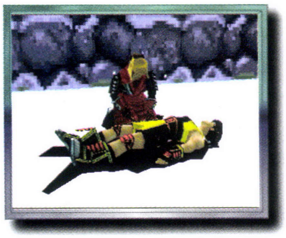


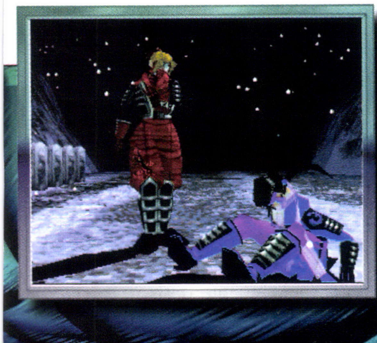


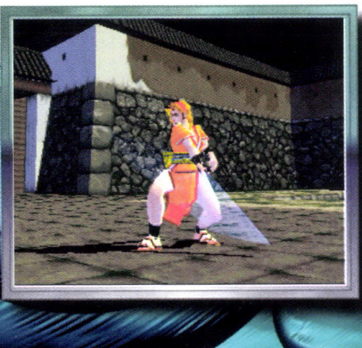












The PS *Extreme* Historical Ranking Chart

EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

PLATINUM GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Tomb Raider	December 1996	99%
NFL Gameday '97	February 1997	99%
Rage Racer	April 1997	98%
Soul Blade	March 1997	98%
NHL Face Off '97	December 1996	98%

GOLD GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Twisted Metal 2	December 1996	97%
Carnage Heart	March 1997	97%
Robotron X	December 1996	96%
FIFA '97	January 1997	95%
Ten Pin Alley	February 1997	95%
Namco Museum Vol. 3	February 1997	94%
Disruptor	December 1996	93%
Bubsy 3D	December 1996	93%
Pandemonium	December 1996	93%
In the Zone 2	January 1997	93%
Powerslave	February 1997	93%
Ballblazer Champions	May 1997	93%
Machine Head	December 1996	92%
Destruction Derby 2	December 1996	92%
Tunnel B1	December 1996	92%
Crusader: No Remorse	March 1997	92%
Vandal Hearts	April 1997	91%
Power Move Pro Wrestling	January 1997	91%
Broken Helix	May 1997	91%
Norse by Norsewest	May 1997	90%
Contra: Legacy of War	December 1996	90%
King's Field II	January 1997	90%

SILVER GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
VR Baseball '97	May 1997	89%
NBA Jam Extreme	December 1996	89%
Pitball	December 1996	89%
MLB Pennant Race	December 1996	89%
NHL 97	December 1996	89%
Suikoden	January 1997	88%
Mech Warrior II	April 1997	88%
Dark Forces	January 1997	87%
Hard Core 4x4	January 1997	87%
Psychic Force	February 1997	87%
Spider	March 1997	87%
Super Puzzle Fighter II Turbo	February 1997	86%
Persona	February 1997	86%
3D Baseball	January 1997	85%
Jet Moto	January 1997	85%
Area 51	February 1997	85%
Cool Boarders	February 1997	85%
Project X	February 1997	85%
Tempest X	February 1997	85%
Virtual Pool	February 1997	85%
The Atari Collection 1	February 1997	85%
Command & Conquer	March 1997	85%
Nanotek Warrior	March 1997	85%
Test Drive: Off Road	April 1997	84%
Rebel Assault	February 1997	84%
Wild Arms	May 1997	84%
VMX Racing	May 1997	84%
Goal Storm '97	May 1997	84%
NBA Shoot Out '97	May 1997	84%
Wing Commander IV	May 1997	83%
Re•Loaded	February 1997	83%
Peak Performance	March 1997	83%
Namco Museum Volume 4	April 1997	83%
Soviet Strike	December 1996	82%
2XTreme	January 1997	82%
Mortal Kombat Trilogy	January 1997	82%
Blast Chamber	December 1996	81%
Dare Devil Derby 3D	January 1997	81%
NASCAR Racing	December 1996	80%
WCW vs. the World	May 1997	80%
Tigershark	March 1997	80%

BRONZE GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Open Ice	March 1997	79%
Descent Maximum	April 1997	77%
Brahma Force	May 1997	77%
League of Pain	May 1997	77%
Sentient	April 1997	76%
Megaman 8	April 1997	76%
The Divide	May 1997	76%
Crypt Killer	April 1997	75%
Rally Cross	May 1997	75%
Independence Day	April 1997	74%
NBA Live '97	January 1997	74%
Hexen	April 1997	70%

TIN GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Samurai Shodown III	January 1997	69%
Battlestations	May 1997	69%
Starwinder	January 1997	68%
The City of Lost Children	April 1997	67%
Street Racer	December 1996	65%
The Crow	May 1997	62%
Incredible Hulk	March 1997	60%
Dragonheart	March 1997	30%
Batman Forever	March 1997	15%

WHAT DO ALL THOSE NUMBERS MEAN?

PLATINUM X	**98-100%**	The ultimate gaming experience.
GOLD X	**90-97%**	"Must buy" games; each carries our editor's seal of approval.
SILVER X	**80-89%**	Good games, but lacking in some area; for fans of that style of game.
BRONZE X	**70-79%**	Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent — don't buy.
TIN X	**0-69%**	Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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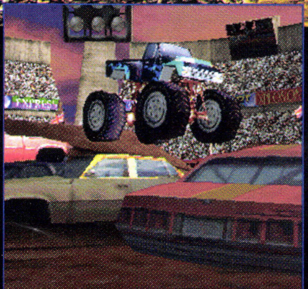

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